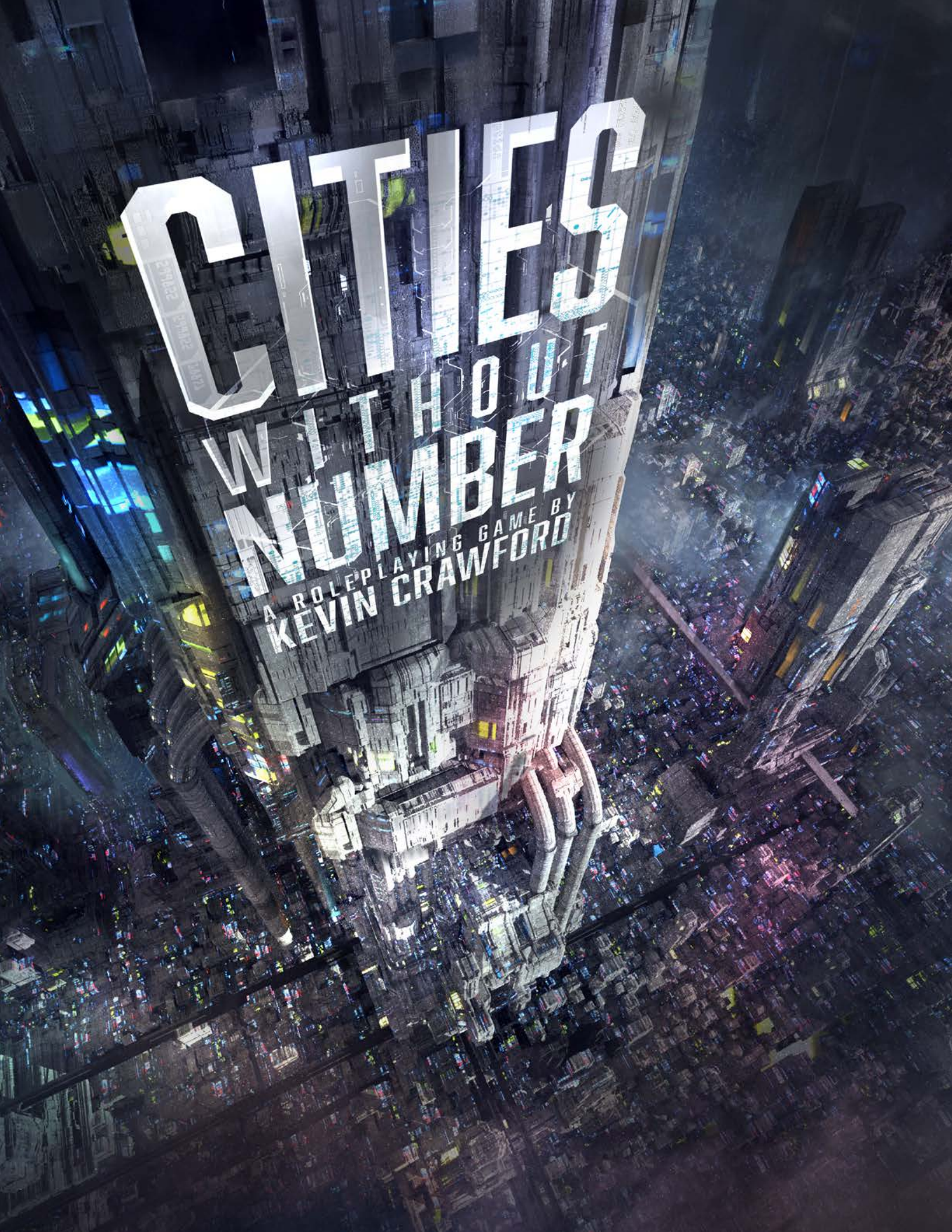




# CITIES

## WITHOUT NUMBER

A ROLEPLAYING GAME BY  
KEVIN CRAWFORD





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# A SLOW CHROME APOCALYPSE

The world is neon and dust.

There is nothing more than the flesh. There is nothing greater than the wires. There is nothing to dream that is not sold and nothing to worship that is not made. It is a mirrorshade world of human reflections, every red hunger and every black passion worshiped in cathedrals of glass and greed. The great love their sins like children and the least want only to be great.

The world has been ending slowly for decades now, its moving parts now cracked and crazed, grinding up lives as grist for its new masters. All the old certainties and calm assurances have proven hollow and all the old faiths are abandoned. Demons long conquered have risen anew, and famine, pestilence, war, and death all ride red through tottering nations. The masses are desperate for salvation, whatever the price.

The megacorps promise hope. With their invincible might and faultless efficiency they bring the starving cities the food to fill their empty bellies, the technology to keep them alive, and the information that keeps them safe and obedient. In exchange for loyal service, their employees live well amid the famished masses. All that they ask for is everything that matters.

The megacorps have the technology. Their wires and their chrome turn mortal flesh into something better, their excisions and subtractions make their subjects something more. Synthetic limbs, augmented organs, nerves of woven fibers and brains of hot silicon... the less you are of your given flesh, the more that you can become. Buy the tech, sign the waivers, get the wires woven tight and you can be the hero you need to be.

It's not a good age to be ordinary. Quarreling street tribes and warring megacorps clash in the shadow of concrete towers while swarms of impoverished men and women scratch out lives on the thin edge of desperation. Wild decadence and neon-lit frenzies fill the nights of the wealthy and their servitors while half-starved junkies and broken-down laborers pass bottles on dark street corners. Anyone with strength, cunning, or sheer ruthlessness knows that the only way out of this misery is through someone else's loss.

The best of these climbers become operators, men and women who hire out their services to the corps and clients who need work done with no questions

asked. It's illegal, of course, but who would say it's wrong? If Lianghe's local director needs a Nova Vida lab burnt down or the Eighth Street Brotherhood has some competition that needs to be discouraged, isn't somebody going to take the job?

It might as well be a professional, someone with the chrome and the cunning it takes to solve problems that have no happy solutions. A veteran operator is criminal nobility, someone who's proved their skills over countless missions and pulled off jobs that not even their clients really thought could be done. Between their cutting-edge augments and their finely-honed experience, they can work dark miracles for anyone who can meet their price.

That price is not small. Those who want the impossible are going to pay for it, and every corp has a division dedicated to "associate management". The same operator who snatched their prototype chip plans last month is the one running an extraction on their rival next week; the past doesn't matter. It was just business, and there's always more business to be done.

Not everybody is willing to work for the corps. Some operators don't want money from the same hands that crushed their families, broke their communities and nations, and sacrificed their friends to its cold markets. Some operators would rather go rogue, taking clients who have no one else to turn to and patrons who have more justice on their side than money. These knights of the street often live brief, bright lives, crossing the wrong corp too early or making plays that have no good future. Most of them knew how it would end when they started, but they make a good story to tell the ones who come after them.

Someone will always come after them. The hour is getting too late and the situation is getting too desperate. The megacorps are too powerful, the Market too all-consuming. The world is eating itself one mouthful at a time, and even the most sanctioned operator can't afford to follow the rules too perfectly.

So fix your hair, load your gun, and run an update on your neuroware. The end of the world is coming, but you can watch it from a penthouse suite if you can pull off this next job. If you're good enough, you might just make it to the top before you catch a bullet.

After all, if life could offer you anything better, the corps would already be selling it.

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## WHAT THIS GAME IS ABOUT

*Cities Without Number* is a cyberpunk game system designed to support sandbox-style campaigning in a near future dystopia. The players take on the roles of criminals, mercenaries, outcasts, and other desperate adventurers engaged in a constant struggle against the pitiless world around them. A few will win through to their private end, be that a luxury chalet in a non-extraditing territory or a knife stained with the blood of their bitter nemesis. Most, however, will become no more than another vanished name, only dimly remembered by the fences and fixers of the street.

### THE PARTS OF THE GAME

*Cities Without Number* consists of two basic parts, either of which can be used as the reader wishes.

In the first part, it is a fully functional Old School Renaissance-informed game system that is compatible with its fantasy sister game *Worlds Without Number* and its sci-fi counterpart *Stars Without Number*. The rules are based on an early edition of the world's most famous fantasy role-playing game, so most readers will have at least a nodding acquaintance with its mechanics. As with its sister games, *Cities Without Number* is available in a free PDF version which can be easily passed around to prospective new players, making it an easier matter to involve them in a new game.

In its second part, *Cities Without Number* is a system-neutral toolbox built to support a GM who wants to build their own cyberpunk setting, or to use the game's rules with another existing setting they may prefer. The tools in these chapters are all built to be equally applicable to almost any cyberpunk game and to support the GM in fabricating the world they want to make.

It is for you to decide how to use this book. There is absolutely nothing wrong with using only parts of it, or picking and choosing from among the pieces to suit your own best preference. You're the one who's playing, and only you know what suits you best.

### SANDBOXES AND YOU

*Cities Without Number* is built to support a GM in running a sandbox-style campaign. Some readers will be familiar with this style of campaign, but others could use a few words of explanation.

A "sandbox" campaign is one where the activities of the PCs are driven primarily by their own motivations and desires. Whereas a more conventional "story arc" campaign might follow a particular sequence of adventures and the progression of a particular conflict, a sandbox campaign has no overarching plot. In a sandbox, the plot is what happens in play.

Sandbox campaigns sometimes have a reputation of being difficult to GM or to play in, and this reputation is not wholly unjustified. A GM who naively cooks up a setting without keeping certain guidelines in mind can easily burn themselves out before ever getting to the table, while players who aren't familiar with the format can flail in search of adventure.

*Cities Without Number* is built to help a group avoid these problems and find the real fun of sandboxes: the excitement of never knowing just what will happen next, the pleasure of knowing that victories are all won by wit and luck rather than plot fiat, and the freedom to take the game in whatever direction the group wants without worrying about wasted prep or unused story lines.

The tools in this book will help a GM through the stages of world creation, showing what parts are essential and which can be left for another time. The mission creation tools will also help a GM populate this world with a vibrant, living swirl of deals, heists, hits, and nameless treacheries to suit a gritty dystopic future. These tools might be new to you if you haven't read a *Sine Nomine* game before, but any GM capable of running an evening's gaming is capable of running a sandbox. A little time, a little patience, and a little reading will arm you with all that you need.





# WHAT PLAYERS AND GMs NEED TO BRING

Tabletop gaming is a social hobby, and that means both the GM and the players need to bring certain things to the table when it comes time to play. No game can survive if the participants aren't on the same page about it, so it's useful to make some expectations clear.

## WHAT GMs NEED TO DO

The Game Master has the biggest part of the work involved in playing this game, but they also have the largest amount of influence on its content. A good *Cities Without Number* GM needs to do a few things in particular.

**GMs need to listen.** As the final arbiter of your campaign world, you need to listen to what the players are trying to do and pay attention to what they find interesting. The GM decides what the campaign is going to involve, but if the rest of the group isn't interested in that, it's going to be a very short campaign.

**GMs need to prep.** You need to have an evening's worth of content ready when it's time to play. The players have presumably told you what they're interested in doing, and between that and the mission creation tools starting on page 142, you should have what you need to generate this material. The prospect of brewing up a cyberpunk adventure can be intimidating at times, but the tools in this book are all designed to make it as simple and painless as possible.

**GMs need to react.** When players do something, you need to make the world around them respond accordingly. It can be a great temptation at times to push PCs on the "correct" track, to elbow them onto a path that you've prepared and that you're comfortable running. Doing so robs you of one of the great pleasures of a sandbox GM, however; the pleasure of not knowing what's going to happen next. If you just let the situation respond logically to what the players have done, you teach them that what their PCs do matters and that their fates are ultimately in their own hands.

**GMs need to be fair.** The baseline assumption of this book is that the GM will be running a fair table with honest dice. If an unlucky shot consigns a favorite PC to an early career as an organ donor, it's a pity, but no dice fudging will save her. If the PCs pull off some demented coup that utterly bypasses a GM's expected preparations, then they get their win even if it means the GM might need to pull out some filler material to occupy the rest of the evening. The players get what their wits and honest dice will give them.

This sort of disinterested even-handedness is not the only way to run a game, and indeed, there are groups and genres for which it's not appropriate. But if the GM intends to do things differently, they should make it clear to the group. So long as everyone understands how matters will be handled and everyone agrees to it, it is perfectly fair to do otherwise.

## WHAT PLAYERS NEED TO DO

Assuming the GM plans to run a sandbox-style campaign, the players need to bring certain things to the game as well. One of these points may be a little unfamiliar to players more accustomed to storyline-style campaigns, so it's worth spelling it out clearly.

**Players need to be there to play.** Phones and electronics get put away, televisions get turned off, and lengthy side conversations about the Local Sports Team are put aside. Players need to pay attention to the game and what's going on, even when it's not their time in the spotlight. There's little more frustrating to a GM than to put work into preparing a game session only to have it overshadowed by a smartphone.

**Players need to play together.** Grim loners, capricious troublemakers, and stars in search of a retinue are not good concepts for most tables. A certain amount of self-interest is normal in any criminal mercenary, but if your PC has no intention of cooperating with the other operators in the game you need to make a new character. The PCs on the team will regularly be trusting each other with their lives, and a character who isn't willing to cooperate or who makes senseless trouble for the rest of the team is going to catch a bullet in short order. Sometimes it will even be fired by the enemy.

**Players need to have goals.** In a sandbox campaign, the PCs are driven by their individual goals. Whether to get rich or die trying, to take bloody revenge on a corp that wronged them, or to make some haven of humanity within a hellishly commoditized world, your PC needs to have some objective to pursue. The GM can't generate interesting mission hooks or provide engaging situations for your team if you don't give them something to go on. It's fine to change your motivations later, or to decide to follow another PC's goal, but you need to have something to drive your life of crime.

## WHAT BOTH NEED TO DO

While GMs and players both have specific roles to play in a game, both need to agree on the campaign premise.

Everyone should spend a little time talking before the GM starts rolling up the campaign. Some groups would love to play a game of ruthless corporate enforcers making hits on rival businesses, while others prefer to be criminal do-gooders working for their next meal and a brighter future. These preferences need to be weighed by the group as a whole.

That theme might change in play as the enforcers get burned by their bosses or the do-gooders find themselves driven to desperation by poverty and danger, but everyone needs to be on board with the initial premise. Once that framing is set, the GM can be confident that their time and prep won't be wasted.



# CHARACTER CREATION

Before you can commence your reckless life of prosecutable corporate offenses, you need to roll up your operator. While you can play *Cities Without Number* with a single GM and a single player, most games will involve a GM and three to five other players, the better to handle the countless different dangers that will face your heroes.

Because your operators will be relying on each other to survive your missions, it's important that you and the other players work together to make PCs that actually *will* work together. You might have a character concept you love, but if that concept can't play well with the rest of the party then you need to go back to the drawing board.

Some players like to lunge headfirst into character creation, letting the dice lead them on wherever they may go. Others prefer to learn more about the setting before developing their operator. Your GM will let you know the details of the world you're playing in and any special features to keep in mind during character creation, but a few basic facts should be understood about the game's default setting.

## WHAT PLAYERS NEED TO KNOW

The world is Earth as of the late 21st century. Modern nation-states have splintered and crumbled into a patchwork of secessionist territories, heritor states, and low-level war zones, all of them possessing no more than a shadow of their former influence.

The world is ruled by the megacorps, transnational organizations that exist above and outside the limits of conventional national governments. They subsidize the surviving states to carry out the unprofitable but necessary work of basic societal maintenance, but their minimal standards are very minimal indeed. Most ordinary citizens live meager lives in massive conurbations, these megaplexes separated by wide zones of desolate, abandoned land. The only occupants of this "outland" are automated corporate farming plantations, roaming bands of smugglers and raiders, and a few hardscrabble towns eking out a slow death in a half-poisoned world.

Life in the megaplexes is dominated by the corporations, with every major media channel and consumer market completely under their control. Nothing is broadcast without their permission and no past exists that is not authorized by their marketing departments. Most people know as little about the world outside their city as they know about the far side of Mars, and few of them find any reason to care about it.

The majority of Earth's billions live as employees of some megacorp or their countless lesser subsidiaries and clients. Ordinary workers haul goods, work assembly lines, staff retail outlets, or claw their way into lower management. The largely hereditary elite stand

above them as company presidents, senior executives, and corporate-sponsored governmental officials. Not all of them are solely obsessed with personal power and advancement, but the ones with softer feelings are the first to fall victim to their ambitious underlings.

Those beneath these "corpors" are the criminals, outcasts, and losers of the world, condemned to scrape up a living through day labor, crime, street hawking, and desperate small businesses. They run shabby stalls, work petty crime, and trade out days of their lives in backbreaking and dangerous labor too risky for valuable corporate assets. Their lives are cheap and brief, with outbreaks of street violence and industrial carelessness snuffing out millions worldwide every month. As much as they hate corpors, most of them would organleg their own mothers for a corp-subsidized cube apartment and a regular paycheck.

Your character has chosen differently. Whether a pampered scion of some fallen corp exec or the daughter of a dead streetwalker, you have chosen to face the world on your own terms. You are an *operator*, a freelance agent hired for criminal jobs and deniable corporate activities.

You are a cut above the ordinary rabble, possessing uncommon talents and abilities. You are no superhuman action hero, but you can succeed where an ordinary hireling would fail, and you can survive situations that would leave most people dead.

You rely not only on your own native talents, but on the benefits of modern technology. Advanced cyberware can give your operator an edge far beyond that of an unaugmented man or woman. These benefits come at a price, and there are risks to your long-term health when replacing so much of your meat with polished metal, but such prices are small compared to the possibilities they grant. All you need is money, and the chrome will give you power.

It is for you to decide what your operator wants, but they must want *something*. Maybe they want money, enough for a life of fabulous decadence and the pleasures knowable only to the elite of a rotting world. Maybe they want revenge, the blood of the wicked as payment for some terrible wrong they've suffered. Maybe they're even mad enough to desire a better world, and are willing to engage in a hopeless struggle for a brighter and fairer tomorrow.

Whatever character you make, whatever concept you choose to play, your character *must* have a goal. This goal can change over time, but it must be enough to drive your operator to action and incline them to cooperate with their teammates. As a "sandbox" gaming system, *Cities Without Number* relies on the ambitions and drives of the PCs to help shape their adventures. Make sure you've got some suitable hungrers to work with.



# ATTRIBUTES

The first step in creating a character is to determine the character's six **attributes**. Attributes describe how strong, quick, clever, perceptive, hardy, or charming your operator might be. Attributes are measured by scores ranging from 3 to 18, with 3 reflecting an attribute so weak that the PC is barely fit for an operator's life and an 18 marking the maximum possible aptitude for a human.

To generate a character's attributes, roll 3d6 six times and assign the results in order to Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. You may then change one attribute of your choice to 14, but you have to do it before you make any Growth table rolls while picking a background.

If you prefer not to roll, you may instead assign the following scores to your attributes in any order you wish: 14, 12, 11, 10, 9, and 7. If you assign your scores, you cannot replace one of them with a 14.

Once you've assigned your attributes, record the **attribute modifier** for each of them. This modifier is applied to relevant skill checks or other rolls related to the attribute. Cyberware sometimes boosts a character's attribute modifiers, depending on the systems that are installed. If you get such chrome put in, make sure to mark down the adjustment on your sheet.

| Attribute           | Affects....                                                        |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strength</b>     | Physical prowess, melee combat, carrying gear, brute force         |
| <b>Dexterity</b>    | Speed, evasion, manual dexterity, reaction time, combat initiative |
| <b>Constitution</b> | Hardiness, enduring injury, tolerating large amounts of cyberware  |
| <b>Intelligence</b> | Memory, reasoning, technical skills, general education             |
| <b>Wisdom</b>       | Noticing things, making judgments, reading situations, intuition   |
| <b>Charisma</b>     | Commanding, charming, attracting attention, being taken seriously  |

| Attribute Score | Modifier |
|-----------------|----------|
| 3               | -2       |
| 4—7             | -1       |
| 8—13            | +0       |
| 14—17           | +1       |
| 18              | +2       |

# SKILLS

Your hero's learned capabilities are **skills**, and every operator has their share of them. An operator can usually attempt to do anything, whether it's to climb a fence around a corporate outpost, talk down a furious chromed-up ganger, or fire a minigun at an incoming security drone, but having the right skill can make a vast difference in results.

Skills are measured in a rating from level-0 for competent practitioners to level-4 for one of the best in the world. Novice operators start with level-0 or level-1 in their skills. You'll choose or roll skills in the next section, when you select a background.

| Skill Level    |                                                                            |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level-0</b> | Basic competence in the skill, such as an ordinary practitioner would have |
| <b>Level-1</b> | An experienced professional in the skill, clearly better than most         |
| <b>Level-2</b> | Veteran expert, one respected even by those with considerable experience   |
| <b>Level-3</b> | Master of the skill, likely one of the best in the city                    |
| <b>Level-4</b> | Superlative expertise, one of the best in the world                        |

## SKILL CHECKS

Your operator is assumed to be competent at all the ordinary functions of their role and background. A corporate renegade will know the biggest subsidiaries of their old corporation, an outlander smuggler will know the major badlands gangs in their old home region, and a freelance street doc will recognize common cyberware systems. They will never fail at the sort of tasks they'd have performed all the time in their background life.

Sometimes, however, the PC will be faced with a situation outside their usual experience, or will try to accomplish a normal task while under considerable strain or disadvantage. In those cases, you'll need to roll a **skill check**.

To roll a skill check, roll 2d6 and add the most applicable attribute modifier and skill level. If the total is equal or greater than the difficulty of the check, you succeed. If less, something goes wrong, or you fail outright in the attempt, or something unexpected happens.

If you haven't even got level-0 in the relevant skill you take a -1 penalty to the roll. Some particularly technical or difficult feats might not be achievable at all without some grounding in the skill.



## THE SKILL LIST

The following skills are standard choices for most campaigns. Games set in a particularly unusual kind of cyberpunk dystopia may use different ones.

Skills are general, and some of them may overlap in some situations. An operator trying to clear a jammed combat shotgun before the corp cops bust through the door might plausibly check either Fix to repair it or Shoot to represent their familiarity with weapons maintenance. Assuming the GM agrees, you can roll whichever skill is better for you.

**Administer:** Manage an organization, handle paperwork, analyze records, and keep an institution functioning on a daily basis. Roll it for bureaucratic expertise, organizational management, legal knowledge, dealing with government agencies, and understanding how corps really work.

**Connect:** Find people who can be helpful to your purposes and get them to cooperate with you. Roll it to make useful connections with others, find people you know, know where to get illicit goods and services, and be familiar with foreign cultures and languages. You can use it in place of Talk for persuading people you find via this skill. Note that the people you meet via Connect are not necessarily inclined to work with you without a good reason; if you want reliably cooperative allies, you need Contacts as described on page 14.

**Drive:** Drive vehicles, sail ships, fly planes, pilot drones, and perform maintenance and basic repairs on such devices. A PC's background may incline them to a particular kind of driving, but with some practice this skill can be applied generally.

**Exert:** Apply trained speed, strength, or stamina in some feat of physical exertion. Roll it to run, jump, lift, swim, climb, throw, and so forth. You can use it as a combat skill when throwing things, though it doesn't qualify as a combat skill for other uses.

**Fix:** Create and repair devices both simple and complex. Your PC may be specialized in some field depending on their background, but this skill can be applied generally by most operators. Roll it to fix things, build things, and identify what something is supposed to do.

**Heal:** Employ medical and psychological treatment for the injured or disturbed. Roll it to cure diseases, stabilize the critically injured, treat psychological disorders, or diagnose illnesses. It's also an important skill for implanting and maintaining cyberware.

**Know:** Know facts about academic or scientific fields. Roll it to understand academic topics, remember relevant history, solve science mysteries, and know the basic facts about rare or esoteric topics.

**Lead:** Convince others to also do whatever it is you're trying to do. Talk might persuade them that following you is smart, but Lead can make them do it even when they think it's a bad idea. Roll it to lead troops in combat, convince others to follow you, inspire employee loyalty, or maintain morale and discipline.

**Notice:** Spot anomalies or interesting facts about your environment. Roll it for searching places, detecting ambushes, spotting things, and reading the emotional state of other people.

**Perform:** Exhibit some performance skill. Roll it to dance, sing, orate, act, or otherwise put on a convincing or emotionally moving performance.

**Program:** Operating or hacking computing and communications hardware. Roll it to program or hack computers, control computer-operated hardware, operate communications tech, or decrypt things. Hacker PCs rely heavily on this skill.

**Punch:** Use it as a combat skill when fighting unarmed. If your PC means to make a habit of this rather than as a recourse of desperation, you should take the *Unarmed Combatant* Focus described later.

**Shoot:** Use it as a combat skill when using ranged weaponry, whether thrown weapons, bows, gun-linked pistols, combat rifles, or heavy artillery.

**Sneak:** Move without drawing notice. Roll it for stealth, disguise, infiltration, manual legerdemain, pickpocketing, and the physical defeating of security measures such as electronic locks.

**Stab:** Use it as a combat skill when wielding melee weapons, whether primitive or complex. It can also be used when throwing weapons.

**Survive:** Depending on the character's background, this might be more a matter of street smarts and urban survival or it might be directed towards outlands bushcraft and wilderness living. Regardless of the original focus, some time and practice can allow it to be generalized by a PC.

**Talk:** Convince other people of the facts you want them to believe. What they do with that conviction may not be completely predictable. Roll it to persuade, charm, or deceive others in conversation.

**Trade:** Find what you need on the market and sell what you have. Roll it to sell or buy things, figure out where to purchase hard-to-get or illicit goods, deal with customs agents, or run a business.

**Work:** This is a catch-all skill for professions not represented by other skills. When you take it, pick a particular profession, such as lawyering, stevedore work, painting, or some other career. The skill then applies to performing that work or making contacts with people in its sphere.



# CHOOSING A BACKGROUND

Your character had a life before they became an operator, and something about that life helped fit them to their new line of work. To determine your hero's past experience, you need to choose or roll a **background**.

A background is simply a thumbnail description of the kind of life your character lived before they became an operator. This past doesn't necessarily need to be closely linked with what you are now; a cybered-up gunslinger might well be a former corp paper-pusher, and a onetime grubby street urchin might be an immaculately polished fixer for the group now. Even so, that gunman will still know his way around a corp HR department, and that fixer will still know the safest places to sleep rough.

After you've chosen or rolled a background, take a few moments to think about why your PC left it behind to live the life they do now. What made them become an operator? Did they want the money? Are they looking for fame? Are they embittered toward the world or looking for revenge against an otherwise untouchable enemy? Or it could be their old life just seemed too much of a dead end to them, and life as a street operative at least held the promise of excitement.

Twenty backgrounds are provided on the following pages. You may roll randomly to see where your hero comes from, or pick one that suits you. If none of the backgrounds appeal to you, you can simply describe your operator's prior life to the GM and pick any three skills that fit that past.

## BACKGROUNDS, SKILLS, AND GROWTH

Once you pick a background, your operator gains several skills associated with their past.

First, you get the free skill associated with the background. Every member of that role or profession needs this skill to function competently, so your operator gets it as well.

Next, you may either pick two other skills from the Learning table for your background, or make three random rolls divided between the Growth and Learning tables. If you pick skills, you can select exactly the talents you want for your hero, while going with random rolls allows your character a little wider range of competence and the option of attribute improvements at the cost of perfect control over their development. If you pick skills, you may pick the same skill twice if you wish, to improve its starting proficiency.

If you're not sure what to pick, just take the two skills listed under "Quick Skills" for your background. They're the ones most critical to the profession.

If you're making up a custom background and want to roll randomly on the Growth and Learning tables instead of making specific picks, either pick existing tables that best fit your concept or make up some new ones with the GM's approval.

## TRAINING SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

When your character is allowed to pick or roll a skill, you learn it at level-0 expertise the first time you receive it. If you receive it a second time, it becomes level-1. If some mechanic or skill choice allows or obliges you to pick it a third time, you can instead choose any other skill in its place.

**No operator can start with a skill level above level-1.**

No matter how many different ways you get a skill pick, level-1 is the maximum starting skill level.

Sometimes you're allowed to pick "Any Skill". This means you can choose any skill to improve. Other entries that read "Any Combat" mean that you can pick either Stab, Shoot, or Punch as you choose.

Rolls on the Growth table that improve your basic attributes can boost them up to a maximum of 18. A bonus that applies to "Any Stat" can be applied to any attribute. If the roll says to add the bonus to Physical attributes, you can add the bonus to either Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. If the roll says to add a bonus to your Mental attributes, you can apply the points to either Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. If the bonus is +2, you may split the points between two different attributes of the appropriate type if you wish.

### d20 Background

|    |                                                     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Bum</b> , a hard-bitten street survivor          |
| 2  | <b>Bureaucrat</b> , for a local government agency   |
| 3  | <b>Clergy</b> , whether formal or informal          |
| 4  | <b>Coder</b> , grinding code for somebody           |
| 5  | <b>Corp Security</b> , muscle for a local corp      |
| 6  | <b>Corper</b> , a faceless cog in their machine     |
| 7  | <b>Criminal</b> , be it thief, mugger, or worse     |
| 8  | <b>Doctor</b> , whether corp med or street doc      |
| 9  | <b>Drone Jockey</b> , running overwatch             |
| 10 | <b>Ganger</b> , rank and file of the street legions |
| 11 | <b>Laborer</b> , finding day labor where you can    |
| 12 | <b>Law Enforcement</b> , such as cops are now       |
| 13 | <b>Manager</b> , a maintainer of cogs               |
| 14 | <b>Outlander</b> , born beyond the city             |
| 15 | <b>Performer</b> , musician, or artist              |
| 16 | <b>Soldier</b> , working for a government           |
| 17 | <b>Spy</b> , in deep for your real employer         |
| 18 | <b>Trader</b> , peddler, hawker, or the like        |
| 19 | <b>Streetwalker</b> , whether cheap or high-class   |
| 20 | <b>Technician</b> , freelance or corp-hired         |



## BUM

Vagrant, junkie, wino... sometimes “homeless person” if somebody’s trying to coax donations. Most in your situation are treated as nothing more than human detritus one step away from a welcome grave. Maybe you were born to a poverty indistinguishable from professional indigence or maybe some event threw you down from a better life, but you don’t intend to go quietly. Being a societal cast-off in a dystopia like this one is something only the strongest survive for long. With the skills you have, you mean to do far more than just survive.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Survive-0           | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Any Combat |
|                     | 2  | +2 Physical | 2  | Survive    |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Physical | 3  | Connect    |
| Connect-0           | 4  | +2 Mental   | 4  | Sneak      |
| Sneak-0             | 5  | Survive     | 5  | Notice     |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Talk       |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Fix        |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Trade      |

## BUREAUCRAT

Somebody had to keep the wheels of government turning, and you were as good as any. The city governments may be little more than shells for corp exploitation, but they and their army of functionaries keep the power on, the slums contained, and some pretense of civic order in place. It can be a very lucrative line of work for those positioned to demand bribes and other inducement, but you’re going to need to collect your bonus pay in a more direct fashion. You know how the machine works, and that can be worth more than any sum of bullets.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Administer-0        | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Administer |
|                     | 2  | +2 Mental   | 2  | Know       |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Mental   | 3  | Talk       |
| Know-0              | 4  | +2 Mental   | 4  | Program    |
| Talk-0              | 5  | Administer  | 5  | Lead       |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Trade      |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Notice     |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## CHOOSING A BACKGROUND FOR A PC

Tom’s new PC, Morton Fuller, needs a concept. Leaving it to the dice, he rolls randomly for Mort’s statistics: Str 14, Dex 7, Con 6, Int 3, Wis 9, Cha 7. Poor Mort is barely smart enough to function as an operator, and his only rolled stat with a positive modifier is Strength, at +1. Because he rolled his stats, Tom can substitute a 14 for one of them, but he decides to wait until after he’s picked a background. He’s going to keep Morton, of course; he wants to see where this guy is going.

In the same random vein he rolls to see what Morton’s background might be and gets a “Bureaucrat” result. How did someone with such subnormal mental capabilities end up a paper-pusher? Tom could pick a different background, but he spends a few minutes thinking about it, and decides Morton was a low-ranking clerk in the city file department who got volunteered for “productivity enhancement neurosurgery”. The results were unfortunate.

Tom decides that Morton is going to eventually become a close-combat bruiser with the *Wired Edge* from his surgeries and the *Killing Blow Edge* to set off the sheer savage frustration Morton feels at his newly-constrained intellect. To help set him up for that, Tom replaces the clerk’s Con 6 with a score of 14, to make sure he can handle some punishment.

Morton still has his background skills, however, gaining an automatic Administer skill at level-0 just for being a bureaucrat. In line with his prior choice to let the dice determine his PC, Tom decides against simply picking two more skills off the Learning table for a bureaucrat. Instead, he rolls randomly, picking one roll from Growth and two from Learning.

The Growth roll is “+2 Mental”. Morton applies that to his Charisma, boosting it to improve its attribute modifier from -1 to +0. His Learning rolls are both Talk; the first gives him Talk-0, and the second increases it to Talk-1. It can’t get any higher during character creation. If he somehow gets the Talk skill again, he’ll need to pick another skill instead.

Morton’s a fairly smooth talker, so whatever damage the surgery did to his intellect must not be immediately obvious to people. Tom decides to think a bit about that, and pick some symptoms that are interesting to play without being annoying to the other players in the group.

Morton also hasn’t got any combat skills right now, but Tom doesn’t worry about that much. Many combat-related Foci come with bonus skills, and he’ll get the chance to pick one free skill of his choice at the end of character creation.



## CLERGY

In the slums, people have little to rely upon but their own strength and God's good mercy. Amid the desperation and desolation of the modern era, thousands of different faiths and sects have sprouted to give solace to their believers. Most of them are corp-sponsored marketing channels for selling spiritual retreats, blessed artifacts, and prestigious church ranks, but a few clergy still stubbornly serve God before Mammon. Such renegades are often thrown on their own devices, forced to collect their own tithes and deliver the Lord's righteous judgment with their own right hands.

## CODER

The corporate world runs on code, and you're one of the people that keep it turning. High-ranking corporate coders are too tightly monitored to work as operators, but the ecosystem of freelancers, self-taught prodigies, and desperate climbers is always churning with new possibilities. You may be a true hacker, skilled at running code under the most stressful situations, or you might focus your operator skills in a more physical direction, keeping your programming knowledge as a backup tool for when your preferred weapon doesn't suit the job.

## CORP SECURITY

There are people hated more than corp security, but most of them are involved in blood feuds, religious wars, or undying gang vendettas. You've almost certainly left the uniform behind, but you still remember how the corporate world works, and more importantly, how its security units operate. You might still have a contact back in the corp you left, or a special reason to resent them. As ex-security, everyone knows that you're never going back. They'd never let you live.

## CORPER

Once one of the fortunate millions, those lucky enough to have a formal job contract with a megacorp. You were above the petty roil of subsidiaries, street shops, and freelancers that clawed for every day's meal. Even the worst-paid corper could have something resembling a civilized life if they toed the corporate line. You didn't, for one reason or another, and now you're on the outside. This is not your world and these are not your people, but you're going to have to learn to cope with this new life, because there's no going back after what happened to you... or what it made you do.

### Free Skill

Lead-0

### Quick Skills

Talk-0

Connect-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Mental

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Mental

5 Connect

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Lead

2 Talk

3 Connect

4 Perform

5 Know

6 Heal

7 Notice

8 Any Skill

### Free Skill

Program-0

### Quick Skills

Administer-0

Fix-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Mental

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Mental

5 Program

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Program

2 Administer

3 Fix

4 Talk

5 Connect

6 Know

7 Notice

8 Any Skill

### Free Skill

Any Combat-0

### Quick Skills

Notice-0

Exert-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Physical

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Physical

5 Any Combat

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Any Combat

2 Administer

3 Connect

4 Notice

5 Exert

6 Heal

7 Sneak

8 Lead

### Free Skill

Work-0

### Quick Skills

Talk-0

Connect-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +1 Any Stat

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Mental

5 Any Skill

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Work

2 Talk

3 Connect

4 Any Combat

5 Notice

6 Sneak

7 Fix

8 Any Skill



## CRIMINAL

It's theoretically possible to live in the slums without breaking a law, but nobody's ever seen it done. You, however, weren't just a criminal by necessity. You were a criminal as a calling, as a profession. Doing what the cops and the corps and the gangs forbade was how you made your living, either as a thief, a con man, an enforcer, or some other variety of lawbreaker. You violated the rules that mattered, breaking the customary detente of fear that keeps the streets functional. You've managed to stay ahead of the consequences so far, but there's no telling how long your luck will last.

## DOCTOR

It was inevitable that the rise of cybernetic tech should have thrown off a host of second-order medical marvels. It's thanks to these wonders that a street doc can do good even with nothing more than a battered medkit and a semi-clean table. You might have practiced as part of a corp-backed hospital, or served in a private clinic, or been something else that had a place in "good society" once. Perhaps you were always part of the street, a local who learned what was needed for their own reasons. Now you're on your own. It's not a problem, though; in a world like this, you'll never lack work.

## DRONE JOCKEY

With as much lead flying around as it does these days, drones are a popular substitute for expensive, trained human flesh. Most drone pilots are corp-employed, running security rigs for corp facilities or keeping a border watch up on isolated regions. Gang bosses and powerful locals also have use for their services, as an armed drone is much less concerned about being shot than a human flunky is. You might make drone piloting the main thrust of your work as an operator, but it could also be a sideline for the job you prefer to do now.

## GANGER

One of the lesser nobility of the street, most districts are ruled by one or more gangs. With enough tribute in cash and fearful reverence, a gang boss can hold the local violence down to a dull roar and make sure that thieves and troublemakers get dealt with quickly. There's an endless need for ambitious, eager new recruits to handle these jobs, and if the mortality rate is high, well, nothing's as cheap as human lives. You've had to cut ties with your old crew, either because they're no longer around or because you did something that couldn't be overlooked. Hopefully no hard feelings remain.

### Free Skill

Sneak-0

### Quick Skills

Notice-0

Connect-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +1 Any Stat

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Mental

5 Sneak

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Any Combat

2 Sneak

3 Notice

4 Connect

5 Talk

6 Survive

7 Exert

8 Lead

### Free Skill

Heal-0

### Quick Skills

Notice-0

Know-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Physical

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Mental

5 Heal

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Heal

2 Notice

3 Know

4 Talk

5 Administer

6 Connect

7 Fix

8 Any Skill

### Free Skill

Drive-0

### Quick Skills

Fix-0

Shoot-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Physical

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Mental

5 Drive

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Drive

2 Fix

3 Shoot

4 Notice

5 Sneak

6 Exert

7 Program

8 Any Skill

### Free Skill

Any Combat-0

### Quick Skills

Connect-0

Survive-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Physical

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Mental

5 Any Combat

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Any Combat

2 Connect

3 Survive

4 Notice

5 Sneak

6 Talk

7 Fix

8 Any Skill





## LABORER

You're one of the faceless millions forced to make a living with day labor and menial toil. Small businesses without the capital to mechanize their work often enlist such laborers, finding it cheaper to discard the injured than pay a street doc. For many laborers, the distinction between crime and legal work is too small to be worth distinguishing.

Choose a general line of work for your laborer, be it construction, dock work, trucking, or the like. When you roll or pick the Work skill, you can substitute another skill for Work if a different one more perfectly reflects your usual labor.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Exert-0             | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Exert      |
|                     | 2  | +2 Physical | 2  | Work       |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Physical | 3  | Sneak      |
| Work-0              | 4  | +2 Physical | 4  | Trade      |
| Fix-0               | 5  | Exert       | 5  | Survive    |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Fix        |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Any Combat |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Once one of the city enforcers, whether a beat cop, a detective, or a paper-pusher back at the precinct. There's too much violence for the city cops to pay attention to anything but the most egregious street murder, and the only time they ever hurry is when big money is upset. Even so, a few idealists keep stubbornly trying to prevent their savage wards from killing each other with impunity. Maybe you felt that way once, but something happened that forced you to leave. The good news is that the street locals have nothing against you; cops aren't nearly as brutal as the gangs are. The bad news is that you're out here alone now.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Administer-0        | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Administer |
|                     | 2  | +2 Physical | 2  | Any Combat |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Physical | 3  | Notice     |
| Any Combat-0        | 4  | +2 Mental   | 4  | Sneak      |
| Notice-0            | 5  | Administer  | 5  | Talk       |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Connect    |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Heal       |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## MANAGER

You ran things. If you were lucky, you ran things for a megacorp, one of the legion of petty middle-managers who kept the machine from binding up on itself. If you were less fortunate, you worked for a subsidiary corp, or a freelance organization, or a community co-op. In either case, you learned how to deal with the friction that human contact creates and the innumerable problems that crop up in a world where destruction is so much easier than order. You're out of things to manage right now, but you still know how to make something out of a whole lot of confused nothing.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Administer-0        | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Administer |
|                     | 2  | +2 Mental   | 2  | Talk       |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Mental   | 3  | Trade      |
| Talk-0              | 4  | +2 Mental   | 4  | Connect    |
| Trade-0             | 5  | Administer  | 5  | Notice     |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Lead       |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Program    |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## OUTLANDER

Everybody lives in cities because cities are where everything is. Everybody except you. Despite all the pollution, all the toxins, all the outcasts too violent or too crazy to exist within city limits, you made your life in the outlands. Maybe you were born in a dying rural town, or maybe you run contraband between isolated city-states, or maybe you just couldn't stand living in a human hive any more. Whatever the reason, you know how to survive where there isn't a convenience store every two blocks, and how to deal with dangers that don't wear a human face.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Survive-0           | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Survive    |
|                     | 2  | +2 Mental   | 2  | Drive      |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Physical | 3  | Fix        |
| Drive-0             | 4  | +2 Physical | 4  | Trade      |
| Any Combat-0        | 5  | Survive     | 5  | Sneak      |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Connect    |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Any Combat |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## PERFORMER

Everybody wants to forget where they are, and you helped them do that. Whether singing, dancing, VR recordings, cam shows, comedy, or some other art, you're good enough at it not to have starved yet, which is a considerable accomplishment. You still haven't made it to the big time, and for one reason or another you've found it necessary to take up an operator's work as well as that of an artist. It could be that stand-up's not paying the rent, or you might have a performance in mind that a particular audience won't ever forget.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Perform-0           | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Perform    |
|                     | 2  | +1 Any Stat | 2  | Lead       |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Mental   | 3  | Connect    |
| Lead-0              | 4  | +2 Physical | 4  | Talk       |
| Connect-0           | 5  | Perform     | 5  | Trade      |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Sneak      |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Any Combat |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |

## SOLDIER

A soldier's work is never done, whether they're wearing the patches of one of the remaining national governments or working under the colors of a corporate military division. Most corps prefer to resolve their differences through buyouts, legal action, and targeted assassinations, but some people just won't listen to reason, and that's where the hovertanks come in. For one reason or another, you've found it necessary to move on from that life. While you may not be as well-supported now as you were then, your familiarity with violence and quick death is something valuable to an operator.

| Free Skill          | d6 | Growth      | d8 | Learning   |
|---------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Any Combat-0        | 1  | +1 Any Stat | 1  | Any Combat |
|                     | 2  | +2 Mental   | 2  | Exert      |
| <b>Quick Skills</b> | 3  | +2 Physical | 3  | Lead       |
| Exert-0             | 4  | +2 Physical | 4  | Notice     |
| Lead-0              | 5  | Any Combat  | 5  | Survive    |
|                     | 6  | Any Skill   | 6  | Heal       |
|                     |    |             | 7  | Administer |
|                     |    |             | 8  | Any Skill  |



## SPY

There's never been a perfect substitute for human intelligence, and you made your living as a source of it. Whether a gang mole, a corp infiltrator, a spy for a rival government department, or an actual agent of a foreign power, you kept your mouth shut and your eyes open, learning what others would keep hidden. Every resource gets spent sooner or later, however, and now you find yourself cut loose. An operator's life isn't so different from the one you've lived so far, and your professional talents will still find use in your new life.

### Free Skill

Sneak-0

### Quick Skills

Notice-0

Talk-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +1 Any Stat

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Physical

5 Sneak

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Sneak

2 Notice

3 Talk

4 Connect

5 Program

6 Exert

7 Any Combat

8 Any Skill

## TRADER

Everyone's looking for a good deal, and you made your living out of finding those deals first. You might've been a small shopkeeper, a street peddler, a struggling business owner, or one of the countless other small fry trying to make a living in the shadow of the megacorps and their pet subsidiaries. Something happened that left your old plans in ruins, and now you've got to use your skills in a different line of work. Fortunately, the average operator is every bit as interested in the flow of money as any trader, and your talents will serve you well.

### Free Skill

Trade-0

### Quick Skills

Notice-0

Connect-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Mental

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Physical

5 Trade

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Trade

2 Notice

3 Connect

4 Fix

5 Talk

6 Administer

7 Any Combat

8 Any Skill

## STREETWALKER

Once a professional distraction from the world, you might have been an ordinary streetwalker, an expensive companion, or some artistic jewel far above the tawdry business of physical contact. The work pays better than street labor, though the danger is often considerably greater. Professional experience has given you a talent for negotiation and diplomacy that can sometimes be more valuable than any amount of firepower, and as an operator, your value will be recognized in your achievements rather than your face.

### Free Skill

Talk-0

### Quick Skills

Perform-0

Connect-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +1 Any Stat

3 +2 Physical

4 +2 Mental

5 Talk

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Talk

2 Perform

3 Connect

4 Trade

5 Sneak

6 Notice

7 Heal

8 Any Skill

## TECHNICIAN

You know how to fix what's broken, patch what's damaged, and jailbreak what's locked. With the megacorps preferring profitable obsolescence to active repair, anyone who can turn legal scrap into illegal gear has a role on the streets, and you're good at it. Maybe you worked for a small shop, or freelanced for a subsidiary, or even made your own living out of piecework and favors done. An operator team always needs somebody to keep the guns firing and the armor intact, and your talents are critical for that work.

### Free Skill

Fix-0

### Quick Skills

Program-0

Exert-0

### d6 Growth

1 +1 Any Stat

2 +2 Physical

3 +2 Mental

4 +2 Mental

5 Fix

6 Any Skill

### d8 Learning

1 Fix

2 Program

3 Exert

4 Trade

5 Notice

6 Connect

7 Drive

8 Any Skill



# CONTACTS

Contacts come in two degrees: *Acquaintances*, who know you and will work with you reliably, and *Friends*, who can be expected to go the extra mile for you. You start play knowing either two Acquaintances or one Friend. To create each, follow these steps:

- Give them a name.
- Give them a sentence of physical description.
- Give them a sentence describing what they do that might be useful to an operator.
- Write a line or two about how you met them.

The tables below give suggestions as to what kind of Contacts might be appropriate and some ideas as to how you came to know them. You can create your own with the GM's permission, assuming they're about the same degree of importance and influence. Contacts should be useful, but not major figures of importance.

You can call on a particular Contact once per game session. Acquaintances will do business with you at usual market rates, but are trustworthy within reason and will do you favors that don't cost them much. Friends will do significant favors and take on substantial personal risk, but expect to be treated as actual friends and not mere minions. As a general rule, Contacts won't go on missions with the PCs.

## d20 Example Contacts

|    |                                              |
|----|----------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Street arms dealer                           |
| 2  | Black market cyberdoc                        |
| 3  | Well-connected streetwalker                  |
| 4  | Middle manager for a specific corp           |
| 5  | Gang enforcer                                |
| 6  | Experienced vehicle mechanic                 |
| 7  | Owner of a popular club                      |
| 8  | Popular drug dealer                          |
| 9  | Thrill-seeking corp scion                    |
| 10 | Watchful neighborhood elder                  |
| 11 | Antisocial freelance hacker                  |
| 12 | Capable drone pilot                          |
| 13 | Shopkeeper who fences goods                  |
| 14 | Security officer working for a specific corp |
| 15 | City hall bureaucrat                         |
| 16 | Fashionable model or public personality      |
| 17 | Well-known musician or artist                |
| 18 | Outlander smuggler                           |
| 19 | Dealer in restricted goods                   |
| 20 | Reliable criminal fixer                      |



## d20 The Start of the Relationship

|    |                                             |
|----|---------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Saved them during sudden street violence    |
| 2  | Disposed of blackmail material for them     |
| 3  | Protected them from a violent ex or partner |
| 4  | Loaned them direly-needed cash or goods     |
| 5  | Did a criminal favor for them               |
| 6  | Was a former lover or fling                 |
| 7  | Knew them growing up                        |
| 8  | Helped each other survive a dire situation  |
| 9  | Learned embarrassing facts about them       |
| 10 | Is some sort of blood relation              |
| 11 | Both once shared the same boss              |
| 12 | Killed somebody they happened to hate       |
| 13 | Both participate in the same hobby or scene |
| 14 | Once worked together on a heist or crime    |
| 15 | Spared them despite their crime against you |
| 16 | You did work for them in a crisis situation |
| 17 | Convinced you're a good luck charm          |
| 18 | They took a personal liking to you          |
| 19 | Saved them when they screwed up badly       |
| 20 | They're highly attracted to you             |



## ONE-ROLL CONTACT TABLES

If the example contacts on the prior page don't spark your imagination, you can use this one-roll table to sketch out the basics of your operator's friend. You can either take one die of each type and roll them all at once, reading the entries from the tables accordingly, or you can pick directly from those items you know you want to include.

Once you've taken one item from each table, stitch them together in a way that makes sense to you. For example, if you roll someone who moves in street circles and can do cyberdoc work for you, it's pretty likely you know a street doc. The "What Can They Do For You?" table should be taken as a general measure for what a Contact can accomplish, but they can also do other things that fit within their basic concept or role.

### d6 Their General Social Circles

- 1 Street people, gangs, and criminal types
- 2 Corpers and other "respectable people"
- 3 Soldiers, mercs, or martial professionals
- 4 Entertainers, artists, or the demimonde
- 5 Badlanders, backwoodsmen, and ruralists
- 6 Docs, techs, hackers, or other skilled pros

### d8 Your Last Significant Interaction

- 1 You bailed them out of a bad situation
- 2 A wild carouse from a shared payday
- 3 A minor job gone wrong for both of you
- 4 You got a problem person off their back
- 5 You used your Edges to solve their problem
- 6 A minor argument over different ideals
- 7 Helped them with their day job a bit
- 8 Did a favor for someone important to them

### d10 What Do They Get Out of This?

- 1 Their day job has a use for your skills
- 2 They know your parents or family well
- 3 They think you're good company
- 4 There is or was a romantic relationship
- 5 They owe you big for an old favor
- 6 They think you're going to make it big
- 7 They trust you to a rare degree for them
- 8 You shared an idealistic cause in the past
- 9 You're a relative or childhood friend
- 10 You take care of an important task for them

### d4 How Well Do You Know Them?

- 1 You just met them within the past month
- 2 You've known them for several jobs so far
- 3 You go back a long time together
- 4 You've known them since you were young

### d12 How Did You First Meet Them?

- 1 Encountered each other as youths
- 2 Were on opposite sides of a job once
- 3 Pulled them out of a fight or disaster
- 4 Hit it off at a club or social venue
- 5 Were hired with them on a prior job
- 6 A fixer sent you to them for help before
- 7 Covered up a major mistake they made
- 8 Introduced by a mutual friend
- 9 You shared a hobby or interest group
- 10 Met during your professional duties
- 11 They were a landlord or neighbor
- 12 They were an employer or fellow worker

### d20 What Can They Do For You?

- 1 Sell you not-too-very-illegal weaponry
- 2 Get you pharmaceutical and street drugs
- 3 Get you an inside line on a local corp
- 4 Drive you around or loan you a vehicle
- 5 Stitch you up or do cyberdoc work
- 6 Smuggle you or objects in and out
- 7 Help you find profitable operator jobs
- 8 Get you some clemency from city police
- 9 Make a local gang play nice with you
- 10 Find you nice used cyberware
- 11 Acquire useful street information
- 12 Give you a safehouse for a while
- 13 Broker contracts with a type of skilled pro
- 14 Fence stolen goods without too big a cut
- 15 Charm information out of a given target
- 16 Maintain or fix your gear for you
- 17 Get you in touch with a type of criminal
- 18 Sell you specialized or unique programs
- 19 Get you permits or city gov information
- 20 Find people who don't want to be found



# EDGES

You know where your PC came from, but where are they now? What special talents or aptitudes do they have that make them a viable operator? In this part of character creation, you decide what kind of tools your PC uses to succeed in their missions. These talents are their *Edges*.

Every PC picks two Edges when they create their character. An operator who survives long enough to reach the fifth level of experience can pick a third Edge. Once an Edge is picked, it cannot normally be changed.

The Edges given in this section are ones appropriate to most cyberpunk dystopias. The deluxe edition of *Cities Without Number* includes several additional Edges suitable for PCs in other flavors of cyberpunk. If your campaign setting includes particularly strong, specific character roles, such as “renegade corper” or “corporate cop”, your GM may provide additional Edge options to specifically support the special abilities of these concepts.

## THE UNDERDOG RULE

Some players who randomly roll attributes for their PC have impressively bad luck. Yet despite their sub-normal aptitudes, these desperate men and women have somehow become operators anyway. There must be *something* special about them if they’ve managed to get this far without getting themselves killed.

Because of this, *PCs whose total attribute modifiers are negative get a bonus Edge*. If a PC’s attribute modifiers after any modifications or Growth rolls total up to -1 or less, they can pick one more Edge as part of character creation. In the case of campaigns that use the optional magical Edges in the deluxe version of this book, magic Edges can’t be picked with this benefit.

This benefit comes at a cost, however. That PC cannot spend skill points to improve their attributes during character advancement, as described on page 45. The PC can still improve their modifiers in other ways, such as with certain cybersystems or Foci.

## ADDING NEW EDGES

GMs who want to create new Edges to fit their campaign world can easily do so, but they should keep a few points in mind.

Edges should be stronger than Foci, because a PC gets far fewer of them. Each one should give a character-defining ability of some kind, one that strongly influences how a PC plays and preferably gives them options that they wouldn’t normally have without the Edge. Lastly, each Edge should support a specific sort of character concept that fits your world. New Edges that just make a PC better at some generic function should be avoided.



## OPERATOR EDGES

The Edges below are ones suitable for most campaigns. For more unique settings or campaign premises, your GM may add additional options or strike some of the ones below.

**Educated:** You may pick a bonus skill of your choice. Whenever you gain skill points from character level advancement, you get a bonus skill point.

**Face:** Gain Connect as a bonus skill. Once per game week, whenever it’s convenient, gain one temporary Acquaintance Contact of your choice, describing them in any way the GM finds acceptable. You lose touch with this Contact after you use this Edge again, but you can use this Edge to connect with them again at a different time. You may also provide favors or payment sufficient to cement the relationship at the GM’s discretion.

**Focused:** You begin play with an extra Focus pick. You may choose this Edge more than once.

**Ghost:** You are uncannily elusive. Gain Sneak as a bonus skill and the *Fighting Withdrawal* combat action is an On Turn action for you. Once per scene, reroll a failed Sneak check related to sneaking or going unseen. Once per game day, as a Move action, move up to 10 meters without anyone around you seeing you move. If you use this movement to get behind cover, you might seem to vanish outright to onlookers.



**Hacker:** Gain Program as a bonus skill. You may begin play with an installed *Cranial Jack* cybersystem, a scrap deck from page 75, and eight program elements of your choice among available Verbs and Subjects. Each round, you gain a bonus Main Action that can only be used to perform hacking or cyberspace-related mental actions. This does not include drone piloting or vehicle driving.

**Hard To Kill:** Instead of rolling 1d6 per level for your hit points, you roll 1d6+2. Your base Trauma Target increases by +1, turning the base 6 into 7.

**Killing Blow:** Gain a combat skill as a bonus skill. Whenever you inflict hit point damage on something, whether by weapon, special ability, or any other source, the damage is increased by 1 point per two character levels, rounded up. Any Trauma Die you roll gains a +1 bonus.

**Masterful Expertise:** Once per scene, as an Instant action, reroll a failed check for a non-combat skill.

**On Target:** Gain a combat skill as a bonus skill. Your basic attack bonus is equal to your character level, instead of the usual half level, rounded down.

**Prodigy:** Pick an attribute other than Constitution; its score becomes 18 and it grants a +3 modifier instead of +2. Characters benefiting from the Underdog Rule can't take this Edge.

**Operator's Fortune:** You may or may not be good, but you are undeniably lucky. Once per game session as an Instant action, when something bad happens to you such as an injury, a failed save, or a botched skill check, test your luck and roll 1d6. On a 1, the bad event is unaffected. On a 2-5, you somehow avert the consequences by blind chance. On a 6, it actually lands on an enemy or rival of the GM's choice, if that's possible. Only events that happened in this same round can be averted.

**Veteran's Luck:** Once per scene, as an Instant action, trigger this ability to gain one of two effects: an attack roll that just hit you is instead treated as a miss, or an attack roll you just made that missed is instead treated as a hit. This ability can be applied to vehicle weapons used by the operator, but it cannot protect against environmental damage, vehicle crashes, falls, or other harm that doesn't involve an attack roll.

**Voice of the People:** You are a rocker, graffiti artist, poet, demagogue, or other rabble-rouser with a considerable reputation. You gain both levels of the *Pop Idol* Focus and an additional Friend Contact related to your art.

**Wired:** You may begin play with up to \$200,000 worth of new or secondhand cyber. If secondhand, you roll once per system for its defect and may end up with unusable junk. You don't need to pay for installation and its maintenance is covered for the next two months. You can redeem this Edge later in your career by paying double the cost of the cyber you selected; if so, you can trade this Edge in for a different one with the GM's approval. See page 27 for example packages of cyber you might pick to suit your character's concept.

## OPERATORS AND CLASSES

Those familiar with *Worlds Without Number* and *Stars Without Number* will notice the absence of multiple classes in this game. Rather than choosing to be a Warrior, an Expert, or a multifaceted Adventurer, every PC in *Cities Without Number* is some flavor of Operator.

In general, this is because the cyberpunk genre isn't as heavily role-typed as most fantasy genres are; everybody has cyber, everybody has guns, and everybody is some flavor of criminal malcontent. The distinctions lie chiefly in which skills a given character focuses on mastering.

Even so, classed characters from WWN and SWN are still entirely compatible with this game, and there's nothing stopping a GM from allowing characters made using those rules in their own campaign. Indeed, you could even export the Operator creation rules to those other games if you like. If you do mix these games together, however, a few guidelines should be kept in mind.

Operators are treated as their own class, one that cannot be taken as a partial class. A PC is either an Operator or another class entirely.

Operators cannot take Foci from other games that are restricted to specific other classes, such as the Expert-only *Polymath* Focus.

Operators are balanced on the assumption that every PC is going to eventually have access to potent cybernetic augmentations, and those who don't take them will likely choose the powerful *All Natural* Focus. If your campaign doesn't have equally ubiquitous cyber, don't allow that Focus.

For GMs who want to mix specific classes from WWN or SWN into their cyberpunk dystopia, the section starting on page 220 provides some specific guidelines for integrating these.

While these additional options can be fun for some tables, a GM should never feel obligated to add them. The rules contained within these pages are plenty to build out a host of classic cyberpunk antiheroes, and new options should be added only when they provide something that the GM wants and the campaign can actually use.



# Foci

Your operator's Edges define their basic toolkit, the talents they have that are fundamental to how they contribute to a mission's success. Your character is more than their minimal competencies, however. Each operator has their own set of aptitudes and knacks which may or may not be related to their main role. These aptitudes are their **Foci**.

A Focus grants a PC some special ability or unusual aptitude. Some sharpen an operator's existing talents, like the **Specialist** Focus, while others grant entirely new options and talents, like the **Many Faces** or **Pop Idol** Foci.

A beginning PC can pick one Focus. If you've taken the **Focused** Edge, you can make a second pick, or take the second level of your initial Focus. You'll gain additional Focus picks as you rise in character level.

Most Foci come in two levels, though a few of them have only a single level of aptitude. Each time you pick a Focus, you gain one level of it. A given Focus level can only be taken once unless the Focus says otherwise.

An operator's Foci don't need to be in line with their Edges. Just because you've made a code-obsessed hacker PC, it doesn't mean that they can't exhibit a remarkable talent with knives and take the **Armsmaster** Focus to reflect it. So long as you can explain how your PC came to have a particular knack or ability, you can take whatever Focus you wish.

## SKILLS AND GEAR FROM FOCI

Some Foci grant a bonus skill. These grant you level-0 in the skill, or level-1 if you already have it at level-0. If you have the skill at level-1 already, you can instead pick any other skill.

Other Foci grant you access to free hardware, such as vehicles or drones. You're assumed to have stolen, scavenged, or built these things as necessary. They're too idiosyncratic to sell, but you can still use them.

The table below indicates how expensive your free hardware can be for a given character level. This budget includes any ammo, fittings, onboard weapons or mods you might add to the vehicle or drone. If the budget isn't big enough for what you want, you can pay for any excess with your own money.

| Level | Vehicle Budget | Drone Budget |
|-------|----------------|--------------|
| 1     | \$5,000        | \$1,000      |
| 2     | \$10,000       | \$5,000      |
| 3     | \$15,000       | \$10,000     |
| 4     | \$20,000       | \$15,000     |
| 5     | \$30,000       | \$20,000     |
| 6     | \$40,000       | \$25,000     |
| 7     | \$60,000       | \$35,000     |
| 8     | \$80,000       | \$45,000     |
| 9     | \$100,000      | \$60,000     |
| 10    | \$200,000      | \$80,000     |



# FOCUS LIST

## ACE DRIVER

If it's got wheels or wings, you can drive it. Your background may lend itself to a particular type of transport, but your natural talent lets you operate any vehicle with an almost instinctive aptitude. These Focus benefits do not apply to drone piloting, however.

**Level 1:** Gain Drive as a bonus skill. You have "acquired" vehicles worth no more than the budget given on page 18, and can replace lost or destroyed gear at a rate of \$10,000 per week. Once per scene, as an Instant action, reroll a failed skill check related to driving or vehicle maintenance and repair.

**Level 2:** Gain Fix as a bonus skill. The Speed of a vehicle you drive is increased by 1 point. Once per vehicle, you can add a mod to it for free, ignoring money and experimental component costs. Only you can effectively operate this mod, but it requires no Maintenance. You can change this free mod with a week of downtime.

## ALERT

You are keenly aware of your surroundings and virtually impossible to take unaware. You have an instinctive alacrity of response that helps you act before less wary persons can think to move.

**Level 1:** Gain Notice as a bonus skill. You cannot be surprised, nor can others use the Execution Attack option on you. When your group rolls initiative, your vigilance allows them to roll twice and take the higher roll.

**Level 2:** In addition to the benefits of level 1, you always act first in a combat round unless someone else involved is also this *Alert*.

## ALL NATURAL

Your mind and body are superbly gifted, but this very excellence leaves you profoundly incompatible with most cyber. You cannot accept implants except for minor cosmetic ones with an unmodified System Strain cost of zero. If a GM is mixing rules from multiple *Without Number* games, this Focus should not be allowed unless cyberware is expected equipment for all PCs. If you're using the deluxe version rules for magic, PCs with magical or psychic Edges such as *Spellcaster*, *Summoner*, or *Graced* cannot take this Focus.

**Level 1:** Gain any skill as a bonus skill. Pick an attribute; its modifier increases by +1, up to a maximum of +3. You can make another such attribute pick at levels 3, 5, 7, and 10, choosing the same attribute or a different one. While you can still suffer Traumatic Hits, you never suffer major injuries as described on page 41.

## ARMSMASTER

You have an unusual competence with thrown weapons and melee attacks. This Focus' benefits do not apply to unarmed attacks or non-thrown projectile weapons. This Focus' bonuses also don't stack with *Deadeye* or other Foci that add a skill's level to your damage or Shock.

**Level 1:** Gain Stab as a bonus skill. You can Ready a Stowed melee or thrown weapon as an Instant action. You may add your Stab skill level to a melee or thrown weapon's damage roll or Shock damage, assuming it has any to begin with.

**Level 2:** The Shock from your melee attacks always treats the target as if they have AC 10. Gain a +1 bonus to hit with all thrown or melee attacks.

## ASSASSIN

You are practiced at sudden murder, and have certain advantages in carrying out an Execution Attack as described in the rules on page 37.

**Level 1:** Gain Sneak as a bonus skill. You can conceal an object no larger than a knife or pistol from anything less invasive than a strip search, including normal weapon detection devices. You can draw or produce this object as an On Turn action, and your point-blank ranged attacks made from surprise with it cannot miss the target.

**Level 2:** You can take a Move action on the same round as you make an Execution Attack, closing rapidly with a target before you attack. You may split this Move action when making an Execution Attack, taking part of it before you murder your target and part of it afterwards. This movement happens too quickly to alert a victim or to be hindered by bodyguards not directly in your path.

## AUTHORITY

You have an uncanny kind of charisma about you, one that makes others instinctively follow your instructions and further your causes. Where this Focus refers to followers, it means NPCs who have voluntarily chosen to be in your service. PCs never count as followers.

**Level 1:** Gain Lead as a bonus skill. Once per day, you can make a request from an NPC who is not openly hostile to you, rolling a Cha/Lead skill check at a difficulty of the NPC's Morale score. If you succeed, they will comply with the request, provided it is not harmful or very uncharacteristic.

**Level 2:** Those who follow you are fired with confidence. Any NPC being directly led by you gains a Morale and hit roll bonus equal to your Lead skill and a +1 bonus on all skill checks. Your followers will not act against your interests unless under extreme pressure.





## CLOSE COMBATANT

You've had all too much practice at close-in fighting and desperate struggles with pistol or blade. You're extremely skilled at avoiding injury in melee combat, and at level 2 you can dodge through a melee scrum without fear of being knifed in passing.

**Level 1:** Gain any combat skill as a bonus skill. You can use pistol-sized ranged weapons in melee without suffering penalties for the proximity of melee attackers. You ignore Shock damage from melee assailants, even if you're unarmored at the time.

**Level 2:** The Shock damage from your melee attacks treats all targets as if they were AC 10. The *Fighting Withdrawal* combat action is treated as an On Turn action for you and can be performed freely.

## CYBERDOC

Any skilled medic can implant and maintain cyber systems, but you have a special aptitude for the work.

**Level 1:** Gain Fix and Heal as bonus skills. You start play with a cyberdoc kit, and you can implant cyberware even if your Heal skill is level-0. You gain a +2 bonus on all cyber implant surgery skill checks. If you perform cyber maintenance for a person, the delicacy of your adjustments decreases the total System Strain cost of their implants by one point until their next maintenance interval.

**Level 2:** The quality of your cyber maintenance improves; the System Strain decrease is equal to two points now instead of one. You never fail to install cyberware correctly. Once per patient, you can build and install a cyber modification to a system as described on page 74 without any cost in money or experimental components, assuming you have the requisite skill levels to build it.

## DEADEYE

You have a gift with ranged weapons. While this talent most commonly applies to guns, it is also applicable to thrown weapons or other ranged weapons that can be used with the Shoot skill. For thrown weapons, you can't use the benefits of the *Armsmaster* Focus at the same time as *Deadeye*.

**Level 1:** Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. You can Ready a Stowed ranged weapon as an Instant action. You may use a rifle or two-handed ranged weapon even when an enemy is within melee range, albeit at a -4 hit penalty. You may add your Shoot skill level to a ranged weapon's damage roll.

**Level 2:** You can reload guns, crossbows, or other slow-loading weapons as an On Turn action, provided they don't take more than a round to reload. You can use ranged weapons of any size in melee without penalty. Once per scene, as an On Turn action when target shooting at an inanimate, non-creature target, you automatically hit unless you roll a 2 on your Shoot skill check or the shot is physically impossible.

## DIPLOMAT

You know how to get your way in personal negotiations, and can manipulate the attitudes of those around you. Even so, while smooth words are versatile, they'll only work if your interlocutor is actually willing to listen to you.

**Level 1:** Gain Talk as a bonus skill. You speak all the languages common to the city and can learn new ones to a workable level in a week, becoming fluent in a month. Reroll 1s on any skill check dice related to negotiation or diplomacy.

**Level 2:** Once per game session, shift an intelligent NPC's reaction roll one step closer to friendly if you can talk to them for at least thirty seconds.

## DRONE PILOT

While anyone can drive a drone under casual circumstances, your knack for it is something unusual.

**Level 1:** Gain Drive and Fix as bonus skills. You acquire or start play with a *Remote Control Unit* cybersystem and its installation. Through connections, scavenging, and parts repurpose, you have free drones and their weapons and fittings worth no more than the budget given on page 18. You can repair these drones without needing spare parts, and destroyed drones can be replaced with a week's work. You always have the equivalent of a drone repair kit on you at no Encumbrance cost.

**Level 2:** You can use the *Assume Command* drone action once per round as an On Turn action. Once per scene, gain a bonus Main Action to command a drone. Any drones you control gain a +2 bonus to their hit rolls, whether or not you're personally firing their weaponry.

## EXPERT PROGRAMMER

A skilled hacker can program their own utilities, but you take this expertise far beyond the norm.

**Level 1:** Gain Program as a bonus skill. You can create and maintain an additional number of program elements equal to your character level+2, split among Verbs and Subjects as you see fit as explained on page 96. You can change your choices with a week's work. Once per day, as an On Turn action, you can make an on-the-fly edit to a Subject program element to turn it into any other Subject program element you need. The element remains altered until you change it again.

**Level 2:** Your programs are exceedingly efficient. Any program elements you write take up only half the usual Memory. A cyberdeck you use gains a CPU bonus equal to your Program skill level.

## HEALER

Healing comes naturally to you, and you're particularly gifted at preventing the quick bleed-out of wounded allies and comrades.

**Level 1:** Gain Heal as a bonus skill. You may attempt to stabilize one mortally-wounded adjacent person per round as an On Turn action. When rolling Heal skill checks, roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die.

**Level 2:** Pharmaceuticals or other technological healing devices applied by you heal twice as many hit points as normal. Using only basic medical supplies, you can heal 1d6+Heal skill hit points of damage to every injured or wounded person in your group with ten minutes of first aid spread among them. Such healing adds no System Strain, but can be applied to a given target only once per day.

## HENCHKEEPER

You have a distinct knack for picking up lost souls who willingly do your bidding. You might induce them with promises of money, power, excitement, sex, or some other prize that you may or may not eventually grant. A henchman obtained with this Focus will serve in loyal fashion until clearly betrayed or placed in unacceptable danger. Henchmen are not "important" people, and are usually marginal sorts, criminals, the desperate, or other persons with few options.

You can use more conventional pay or inducements to acquire additional henchmen, but these extra hirelings are no more loyal or competent than your pay and treatment can purchase.

**Level 1:** Gain Lead as a bonus skill. You can acquire henchmen within 24 hours of arriving in a community, assuming anyone is suitable hench material. These henchmen will not fight except to save their own lives, but will go with you on missions and risk great danger to help you. Most corper henchmen will have 5 HP, a +0 attack bonus, and a Morale of 7, plus whatever gear they're given. Slum-dwellers and other natives of harsh societies will fight as Street Thugs per page 188 if pressed. You can have one henchmen at a time for every three character levels you have, rounded up. You can release henchmen with no hard feelings at any plausible time and pick them back up later should you be without a current henchman.

**Level 2:** Your henchmen are remarkably loyal and determined, and will fight for you against anything but clearly overwhelming odds. Whether through natural competence or their devotion to you, they're treated as a Basic Corp Security from page 186. You can make faithful henchmen out of skilled and highly-capable NPCs, but this requires that you actually have done them some favor or help that would reasonably earn such fierce loyalty.

## MANY FACES

You have multiple usable identities registered with corporate and governmental databases. These identities are so deeply embedded in the systems that they're almost impossible to pry out unless you do something to compromise them.

**Level 1:** Gain Sneak as a bonus skill. You can maintain one alternate identity at a time per three character levels, rounded up. These identities have their own names, backgrounds, criminal records, financial dealings, and bank accounts, and will register as authentic to all normal corporate and governmental checks. If an identity is compromised or you want a different one, you can replace it with a week's work. False identities cannot be important people or involve corporations you don't have a Contact in already.

## POP IDOL

Whether a street musician, graffiti artist, underground journalist, cam girl, folk singer, or Robin Hood-esque thief, you have a devoted following of enthusiasts who are willing to help you when you need them.

**Level 1:** Gain Perform as a bonus skill. Once per game week, with an hour or so of messaging, you can mobilize about a hundred of your fans to perform some act of your choice, provided it's no more than mildly criminal or slightly dangerous. Flash mobs, getaway drivers, scouting reports, tailing people, or instant parties might all qualify as services. Your fans don't have any special skills, but they'll do anything ordinary workers or civilians could do. If you mobilize them for donations or merch purchases, you get \$1,000 per character level, doubled at fifth level and quadrupled at tenth. You can't mobilize them to buy your content more than once per month.

**Level 2:** You can mobilize up to a hundred fans per character level, though major mobs are likely to draw a law enforcement response. You've cultivated fan leaders who can pass along your wishes deniably, concealing your involvement in the crowd. Your donation and merch earning amounts double. Your Charisma modifier increases by +1, to a maximum of +2.



## ROAMER

You might be a footloose bum with a knack for stowing aboard cargo shipments, a hard-bitten outlander smuggler, or a restless seeker of the horizon. Either way, you've seen more of the world with your own two eyes than any common corper ever will.

**Level 1:** Gain Survive and Drive as bonus skills. You have conversational skill in all common languages spoken in the region or city, and you never get lost. You have "acquired" one or more vehicles worth no more than the budget given on page 18. You can replace lost or damaged vehicles at a rate of \$10,000 per week.

**Level 2:** Once per scene, as an Instant action, you can reroll a failed skill check related to safe traveling or vehicle operation, whether to fix a blown engine or talk down a ganger who doesn't like strangers crossing his turf.

## SAFE HAVEN

You have the contacts and expertise to find safehouses and bolt holes that no one else would think to find. You know how to persuade landlords into helping you for nebulous future advantages.

**Level 1:** Gain Sneak as a bonus skill. If you spend a week in a particular neighborhood, you can find or arrange a secure safe house and the on-call assistance of a local cyberdoc or medic willing to perform emergency care for no more than you can afford to pay. This safe house will always go unnoticed unless you are at Heat 8+ or specifically compromise it; even in that case, it will remain undiscovered for at least 24 hours if you can get to it without being followed. If a safe house is burnt, you can find a new one with another week's work. A PC can't have more safe houses active at once than their character level.

**Level 2:** Your safe houses are actively protected by the local authorities, be they gang members, paid-off cops, or cooperative corp security. Provided you don't make them angry, they'll defend you from most ordinary degrees of pursuit. You can find safe havens geared with the equivalent of tech workshops or level one cyberclinics.

## SHOCKING ASSAULT

You're extremely dangerous to enemies around you. The ferocity of your melee attacks stresses and distracts enemies even when your blows don't draw blood.

**Level 1:** Gain Punch or Stab as a bonus skill. The Shock damage of your weapon treats all targets as if they were AC 10, assuming your weapon is capable of harming the target in the first place and the target is not immune to Shock.

**Level 2:** In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to the Shock damage rating of all melee weapons and unarmed attacks that do Shock. As usual, regular hits never do less damage than this Shock would do.

## SNIPER'S EYE

You are an expert at placing a bullet or arrow on an unsuspecting target. These special benefits only apply when making an Execution Attack with a gun, bow, or thrown weapon, as described on page 37.

**Level 1:** Gain Shoot as a bonus skill. When making a skill check for a ranged Execution Attack or target shooting, roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die.

**Level 2:** You don't miss ranged Execution Attacks. A target hit by one takes a -4 penalty on the Physical saving throw to avoid immediate mortal injury. Even if the save is successful, the target takes double the normal damage inflicted by the attack.

## SPECIALIST

You are remarkably talented at a particular skill. Whether a marvelous cat burglar, a natural athlete, a brilliant engineer, or some other savant, your expertise is extremely reliable. You may take this Focus more than once for different skills.

**Level 1:** Gain a non-combat skill as a bonus. Roll 3d6 and drop the lowest die for all skill checks in this skill.

**Level 2:** Roll 4d6 and drop the two lowest dice for all skill checks in this skill.

## TINKER

You have a natural talent for modifying and improving equipment, as given in the rules on page 46.

**Level 1:** Gain Fix as a bonus skill. Your Maintenance score is doubled, allowing you to maintain twice as many mods. Vehicle, cyber, and gear mods cost only half their usual price in dollars, though experimental component requirements remain the same.

**Level 2:** Your Fix skill is treated as one level higher for purposes of building and maintaining mods and calculating your Maintenance score, up to a maximum of Fix-5. Advanced mods require one fewer experimental components to make, down to a minimum of zero.



## UNARMED COMBATANT

Your empty hands are more dangerous than knives in the grip of the less gifted. Your unarmed attacks are counted as melee weapons when it comes to binding up opponents wielding pistols, rifles and similar ranged arms, though you need at least one hand free to do so.

**Level 1:** Gain Punch as a bonus skill. Your unarmed attacks become more dangerous as your Punch skill increases. At level-0, they do 1d6 damage. At level-1, they do 1d8 damage. At level-2 they do 1d10, level-3 does 1d12, and level-4 does 1d12+1. At Punch-1 or better, they have the Shock quality equal to your Punch skill against AC 15 or less. While you normally add your Punch skill level to any unarmed damage you inflict, don't add it twice to Shock damage. If you choose to strike lethally with unarmed attacks, they have a Trauma Die of 1d6 and a Trauma Rating of x2.

**Level 2:** Even on a miss with a Punch attack, you do an unmodified 1d6 damage, plus any Shock that the blow might inflict on the target. Your Trauma Die becomes 1d8 for lethal attacks.

## UNIQUE GIFT

Your PC has a unique piece of cyberware, an exceptional human ability, or some experimental genetic modification that grants them some benefit that isn't covered under existing options.

This benefit shouldn't be a simple bonus to something you already do; it should be a power or ability that gives you options that you just wouldn't have otherwise. It also shouldn't be used to simply optimize an existing character concept, but instead should allow you to make a character who wouldn't make sense without this special ability.

It's up to the GM to decide what's reasonable and fair to be covered under this gift, and whatever they allow should be roughly equivalent to the existing Focus options in overall power. If an ability is particularly powerful or the cybernetics are especially draining, it might require the user to take System Strain to use it, as described on page 40.

As a general rule this ability should be better than a piece of gear the PC could buy. The player is spending a very limited resource when they make this Focus pick, so what they get should be good enough that they can't just duplicate it with a fat bank account.

## UNREGISTERED

Whether by unrecorded birth, database corruption, or sheer luck, you simply do not exist in any government or corporate database. If taken with the *Many Faces* Focus, your own identity is lost, but you can create others for your own uses. If this Focus is taken after character creation, it means your existing records have become hopelessly corrupted and lost.

**Level 1:** You have no government or corporate database records associated with you, and it is almost impossible to add any such records without them ending up corrupted or deleted within a week. Human beings can remember you, but they can't rely on computerized records to keep track of you or your activities. You can keep money on credit chips or in cash, but banking or formal property ownership is almost impossible for you.

## WHIRLWIND ASSAULT

You are a frenzy of bloody havoc in melee combat, and can hack down numerous lesser foes in close combat... assuming you survive being surrounded.

**Level 1:** Gain Stab or Punch as a bonus skill. Once per scene, as an On Turn action, apply your Shock damage to all foes within melee range, assuming they're susceptible to your Shock.

**Level 2:** The first time you kill someone in a round with a normal attack, either with its rolled damage on a hit or with the Shock damage it inflicts, instantly gain a second attack on any target within range using any Ready weapon you have.



# HIT POINTS, ATTACK BONUS, AND SAVES

Combat in *Cities Without Number* tends to be nasty, brutish, and short. A pistol round to a ganger's chest is usually enough to settle a disagreement, and PC operators are equally fragile at the start of their careers, before they've had time to learn how to duck the worst perils of the street. Even so, sometimes an operator isn't given a choice about whether or not to fight.

## HIT POINTS

A person's nearness to defeat is measured in *Hit Points*. When a target's hit points reach zero, they're either dead, dying, or helpless, depending on the kind of harm that brought them there. A full explanation of injury and death can be found on page 40, in the Systems chapter.

Novice operators roll 1d6 to determine their starting hit points, to which they add their Constitution modifier. Thus, if you have a Constitution of 7, you'd roll 1d6-1 to find your starting hit points. No hit point die can result in less than 1 hit point, even with a Constitution penalty.

If your operator has the *Hard to Kill* Edge, they can roll 1d6+2 for their hit points, again adjusted by their Constitution modifier.

Don't worry too much if you get a low roll. Every time you advance a character level, you reroll all your hit dice and take the better result. You'll get another chance to roll your hit points when you reach second level, assuming your operator can live that long.

## ATTACK BONUS

Whenever your operator tries to shoot, stab, punch, or otherwise harm a target, they need to make an attack roll, as explained on page 33. This attack roll is modified by their *attack bonus*.

For a novice PC, their attack bonus is +0. If you've taken the *On Target* Edge, then your starting attack bonus is +1.

## SAVING THROWS

Sometimes a PC's fate is uncertain. Does the toxic gas overcome them? Does the collapsing building crush them? Does the neuralware hack stun them? These ambiguous situations are resolved with a *Saving Throw*.

To make a saving throw, roll 1d20 and try to equal or exceed one of the four the saving throw targets listed below. Good attributes can help improve your odds of surviving a peril.

**Physical saves** are made when your PC tries to resist poison, endure exhaustion, fight off a physical effect, or withstand bodily suffering. You subtract the better of your Strength or Constitution modifiers from your Physical save target.

**Evasion saves** are made when your PC tries to pull back from a yawning pit, dive out of a grenade blast, catch a plunging comrade, or otherwise use quick reflexes to avert some catastrophe. You subtract the better of your Intelligence or Dexterity modifiers from your Evasion save target.

**Mental saves** are made when your PC tries to resist neurological hacking, fight off mental effects, or avoid psychological harm. You subtract the better of your Wisdom or Charisma modifiers from your Mental save target.

**Luck saves** are made when only blind luck can influence the outcome of a danger, and your only hope is that Death is looking for someone else. No attribute modifies your save target.

Saving throws are made to avoid unusual perils or exceptional dangers rather than the usual hazards of combat, so they won't help you dodge gunfire or avoid being slashed open by cyberclaws. The GM will tell you when to roll a saving throw, and will decide what category it should go under.

| Level | Normal Hit Dice | Hard to Kill Hit Dice | Normal Attack Bonus | On Target Attack Bonus | Physical Save | Evasion Save | Mental Save | Luck Save |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1     | 1d6             | 1d6+2                 | +0                  | +1                     | 15+           | 15+          | 15+         | 15+       |
| 2     | 2d6             | 2d6+4                 | +1                  | +2                     | 14+           | 14+          | 14+         | 14+       |
| 3     | 3d6             | 3d6+6                 | +1                  | +3                     | 13+           | 13+          | 13+         | 13+       |
| 4     | 4d6             | 4d6+8                 | +2                  | +4                     | 12+           | 12+          | 12+         | 12+       |
| 5     | 5d6             | 5d6+10                | +2                  | +5                     | 11+           | 11+          | 11+         | 11+       |
| 6     | 6d6             | 6d6+12                | +3                  | +6                     | 10+           | 10+          | 10+         | 10+       |
| 7     | 7d6             | 7d6+14                | +3                  | +7                     | 9+            | 9+           | 9+          | 9+        |
| 8     | 8d6             | 8d6+16                | +4                  | +8                     | 8+            | 8+           | 8+          | 8+        |
| 9     | 9d6             | 9d6+18                | +4                  | +9                     | 7+            | 7+           | 7+          | 7+        |
| 10    | 10d6            | 10d6+20               | +5                  | +10                    | 6+            | 6+           | 6+          | 6+        |

# STARTING GEAR

Every new operator has managed to buy, beg, borrow, or scrounge a certain amount of equipment to support their new career. Without the right gear, even the most promising young hope is likely to have a quick, unpleasant end.

A novice PC has \$500 to purchase gear from the equipment tables starting on page 50, plus one single item worth no more than \$1,000, such as a rifle for a hitman, a scrap cyberdeck for a hacker, or some other tool of their trade. Their recent work has been profitable enough to have paid for one month of a middle-class lifestyle as explained on page 51. After that month, they're on their own for making rent and avoiding poverty.

Those with Foci such as *Drone Pilot* or *Ace Driver* that grant free equipment can also choose vehicles and fittings from the appropriate sections of the book starting on page 76 and page 82, with the budget for a first-level character given on page 18.

If you don't care to spend the time shopping the equipment tables, a new operator can pick one of the packages below, perhaps swapping out an item or two at the GM's discretion. The value of the packages tends to be a little higher than simple starting cash to reflect their more limited flexibility. PCs with Foci such as *Drone Pilot* can still pick their Focus gear in addition to this starting package.

| Gunslinger                                                      | Enc. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Heavy Pistol (1d8 dmg, Trauma 1d6/x3)                           | 1    |
| 3 magazines and 24 cartridges                                   | 3    |
| Armored Clothing<br>(AC 16/14, Damage Soak 5, +1 Trauma Target) | 2    |
| Knife<br>(1d4 dmg, Shock 1/AC 15, Trauma 1d6/x3)                | 1    |
| Smartphone, basic                                               | -    |
| Trauma Patch                                                    | 1    |

| Tech                                             | Enc. |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| Light Pistol<br>(1d6 dmg, Trauma 1d8/x2)         | 1    |
| 3 magazines and 45 cartridges                    | 3    |
| Clothing, ordinary                               | 0    |
| Knife<br>(1d4 dmg, Shock 1/AC 15, Trauma 1d6/x3) | 1    |
| Toolkit                                          | 1    |
| Lockpicks                                        | 1    |
| Smartphone, basic                                | -    |
| \$50 in remaining cash                           |      |

| Face                                             | Enc. |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| Light Pistol<br>(1d6 dmg, Trauma 1d8/x2)         | 1    |
| 3 magazines and 45 cartridges                    | 3    |
| Reinforced Clothing<br>(AC 13/10, Damage Soak 2) | 0    |
| Knife<br>(1d4 dmg, Shock 1/AC 15, Trauma 1d6/x3) | 1    |
| Smartphone, basic                                | -    |
| Clothing, fashionable                            | 1    |
| \$125 in remaining cash                          |      |

| Badlander                                        | Enc. |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| Rifle<br>(1d10+2 dmg, Trauma 1d8/x3)             | 2    |
| 3 magazines and 18 cartridges                    | 3    |
| Clothing, ordinary                               | 0    |
| Knife<br>(1d4 dmg, Shock 1/AC 15, Trauma 1d6/x3) | 1    |
| Trauma Patch                                     | 1    |
| Survival Kit                                     | 1    |
| Bundle of 3 days of military rations             | 1    |

| Medic                                    | Enc. |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Light Pistol<br>(1d6 dmg, Trauma 1d8/x2) | 1    |
| 3 magazines and 45 cartridges            | 3    |
| Clothing, ordinary                       | 0    |
| Cyberdoc Kit                             | 2    |
| Trauma Patch (3)                         | 3    |
| 6 doses of Lurch                         | -    |
| Smartphone, basic                        | -    |
| \$50 in remaining cash                   |      |

| Hacker                                   | Enc. |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Light Pistol<br>(1d6 dmg, Trauma 1d8/x2) | 1    |
| 3 magazines and 45 cartridges            | 3    |
| Clothing, ordinary                       | 0    |
| Scrap cyberdeck (see page 75)            | 1    |
| VR crown, cheap                          | 1    |
| Smartphone, basic                        | -    |
| \$50 in remaining cash                   |      |





# FINAL TOUCHES

Your operator is almost ready to hit the streets. Just a few final touches need to be laid on before you'll be ready to send them into the world.

## PICK A FREE BONUS SKILL

Most of a character's skills come from their background, Edges, and Foci, but there's always room for a little personal development. You can pick one skill of your choice to gain at level-0, or at level-1 if you already have it at level-0. You can't pick a skill that you already have at level-1.

## RECORD WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Now that you know what kind of weaponry or armor your operator has, take a moment to record the total hit bonus for your weaponry. This is equal to your base attack bonus plus your relevant Stab, Shoot, or Punch skill, and the relevant attribute modifier for the weapon given on the tables starting on page 54. If two attributes are listed for a weapon, use whichever is better for you. If you lack even level-0 skill in the weapon, take a -2 hit penalty with it.

For each weapon's damage and Shock, note down the information from the table. You add your attribute modifier to both damage dice and Shock. Punch weapons or unarmed attacks can also add your Punch skill to the damage die.

For your PC's Armor Class, record the ranged and melee AC of the armor you usually wear. Unarmored humans have an AC of 10 against both melee and ranged attacks. Both types of Armor Class are modified by your Dexterity modifier, improving it on a bonus and worsening it on a penalty.

## CHOOSE STARTING LANGUAGES

Characters begin with fluency in their city's most common language and the native language of their particular ethnic enclave or separate society, if that's a different tongue.

PCs also have fluency in additional languages based on their Connect and Know skill levels. Level-0 in either grants one more language and level-1 grants two. Thus, a PC with Connect-1 and Know-1 skills would start fluent in their native tongue, the city's common language, and four additional languages of their choice. Increasing Connect or Know skills later can allow them to learn one more language for each level they gain, as can spending a few months immersed in a culture.

## PICK A NAME, GOAL, AND TIES

Lastly, make sure your character has a name, a specific goal, and workable ties with the other PCs.

Your operator absolutely needs some reason to be running the risks they've decided to take. They may be looking for money, for excitement, or for revenge against a particular corporation, but they need to want *something* before they finish character creation. If your PC doesn't have a goal, it's extremely difficult for your GM to present situations that will catch their attention, or for you to decide what kind of ambitions and schemes your operator might embark on. This goal can change, but you need something to start with.

Aside from personal motivation, the PC also needs to have some kind of ties with the other player characters in the group. Spend a few minutes talking with your fellow players and figure out why your PC trusts and wants to work with the other characters in the party. Take care to avoid "antisocial loner" archetypes that don't play well with others; it doesn't take much effort to shop your PC to the corps if you end up becoming a liability to the rest of your crew.

Once this final step is complete, your PC is ready to face the world. Your GM will likely be giving you an introductory adventure to help you get your feet wet, and then it will be on to the wider sandbox of your home city. And if luck is against you? Make up a fresh operator. There's always a new face to be found.



## SAMPLE CYBERWARE PACKAGES

Players who take the *Wired Edge* can pick from the cyberware options starting on page 62. This long list can be somewhat overwhelming to new players, however, especially if they don't know exactly how all these choices might affect their PC in play.

To simplify things a few example packages are provided below, along with an explanation of how they might work during play. PCs can always add to these choices, up to the Edge's \$200,000 maximum budget, but remember that every additional piece of cyber is that much more to repay if you ever want to refund *Wired* for a different Edge.

Each package is listed with the total System Strain it adds to your PC. This total cannot exceed your Constitution. If your character has a weak Constitution and can't handle a package's System Strain, you should consider adding a \$20,000 *Cybernetic Infrastructure Baseline* system as described on page 66.

Packages also list the monthly maintenance costs for the cyber. The *Wired Edge* pays for the first two months of maintenance, but after that it's on you to find enough work to support your chrome.

| Cutter                                                              | Cost    | SS |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----|
| <b>Body Blades II:</b> 2d6 dmg, Shock 4/15, Trauma 1d10/x3          | \$25K   | 2  |
| <b>Enhanced Reflexes I:</b> 1/scene get a bonus Main Action         | \$100K  | 2  |
| <b>Dermal Armor I:</b> AC 16 vs. melee and ranged, +1 Trauma Target | \$40K   | 1  |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        | \$165K  | 5  |
| <b>Monthly Maintenance</b>                                          | \$8,250 |    |

A classic choice for close-in brawlers and professional assassins, this package gives you powerful melee blades, higher resistance to unlucky Traumatic Hits, and a bonus action each fight for close-in rushes.

| Gunner                                                                 | Cost    | SS  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|
| <b>Gunlink:</b> Ignore aim penalties, reroll a gun miss 1/scene        | \$25K   | 1   |
| <b>Enhanced Reflexes I:</b> 1/scene get a bonus Main Action            | \$100K  | 2   |
| <b>Cybereyes with Infrared Vision:</b> Flash protected and infra-sight | \$15K   | 0.5 |
| <b>Total</b>                                                           | \$140K  | 3.5 |
| <b>Monthly Maintenance</b>                                             | \$7,000 |     |

You're not as durable as a melee specialist, but you're more likely to hit with your *Gunlink* cyber and enhanced vision. You'll want to find the best gun you can get and keep out of reach of melee attackers.

| Hacker or Driver                                                   | Cost    | SS   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|
| <b>Cranial Jack:</b> Can plug directly into jack-enabled hardware. | \$1K    | 0.25 |
| <b>Neural Buffer:</b> Gain 3 HP/level versus neural hacking damage | \$40K   | 1    |
| <b>Headcomm:</b> Provides silent radio or cell communications      | \$1K    | 0.25 |
| <b>Remote Control Unit:</b> Remote control drones or vehicles      | \$10K   | 2    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                       | \$52K   | 3.5  |
| <b>Monthly Maintenance</b>                                         | \$2,600 |      |

You might already have a free *Cranial Jack* if you picked the *Hacker Edge*, and PCs who only plan on driving or piloting drones might drop the *Neural Buffer*. As cheap as this package is, some users might add some combat cyber such as a *Gunlink* or *Enhanced Reflexes*.

| Sneak                                                                   | Cost    | SS  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|
| <b>Cybereyes with Infrared Vision:</b> Flash protected and infra-sight  | \$15K   | 0.5 |
| <b>Stick Pads:</b> Can cling to or climb sheer surfaces or overhangs    | \$15K   | 0.5 |
| <b>Cyberears w/Positional Detection:</b> Noise protection+position loc. | \$25K   | 0.5 |
| <b>Total</b>                                                            | \$55K   | 3.5 |
| <b>Monthly Maintenance</b>                                              | \$2,750 |     |

Flashbangs are melee weapons to you, and you don't need light to track guards or find a way over a wall. You have room in your budget for more cyber, but you don't want to be scouting alone when a fight starts.

| Techie or Doc                                                                                              | Cost    | SS   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|
| <b>Omnihand:</b> +1 skill check once/scene for technical work                                              | \$10K   | 0.25 |
| <b>Skillplug Jack II:</b> Can use level-1 physical or mental skill plugs                                   | \$25K   | 0.5  |
| <b>Skill Plugs:</b> Level-1 skill plugs for any desired skill, \$10K for mental skills, \$20K for physical | -       | -    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                               | \$35K   | 0.75 |
| <b>Monthly Maintenance</b>                                                                                 | \$1,750 |      |

An *Omnihand* is of no use for surgery, but it's a convenient multi-tool for a tech. Skillplugs can be bought with *Wired* funds, but remember that you can only run one at a time with a single skillplug jack, and installing more than one jack increases the risk that a plug will lock up as explained on page 64.



# THE RULES OF THE GAME

Every operator must encounter situations in which the outcome is not a given. Whether squeezing off a shot at corp security or hacking the speedware of a berserk cyborg, they will often attempt actions that may not work out well. A GM needs fair and consistent systems by which to judge these efforts and give the players a plausible result.

This chapter contains the rules for *Cities Without Number*. With the characters made in the prior chapter and the guidelines given here, a GM should be able to adjudicate the great majority of the missions and private undertakings attempted by the team.

## THE BASIC SYSTEMS

There are a few basic systems in the rules that every GM and player should understand. These particular systems come up regularly during play, and it can slow down the game considerably if they need to be explained too often. Some players may want to print out the combat reference on page 33 beforehand.

**Skill checks** are used whenever the PCs are attempting some feat of skill that doesn't involve combat. When the PCs try to climb a corp tower, persuade a crime boss to sell them some juicy blackmail material, or do something else that requires expertise, a skill check is in order. This section also describes those situations in which a skill check is not necessary, such as when the feat is something ordinary for a character's background or too uninteresting to merit the roll.

**Saving throws** are rolled when the heroes try to dodge some dire fate. Poisons, cyberware hacks, stumbling plunges into fathomless pits, and diving for cover against an exploding grenade might all call for a saving throw. Not every misfortune allows a save; a cyberclaw in the gut must be evaded with efforts in combat, and not with an Evasion save. Even so, a GM can always call for a particular save to give an operator a chance to escape the worst of some other calamity.

**Combat** is something almost inevitable to most campaigns, though it can be lethal for novices and scarcely less dangerous for more experienced operators. This system will help you find out whether your PC has succeeded in gutting the ganger who was trying to brain them or if their skull has been smashed by his salvaged crowbar. Cunning maneuvers to save your own hide or perforate your foe are described in this section.

Players familiar chiefly with more modern games are encouraged to give the combat section a careful read. The operators of *Cities Without Number* have nothing in the way of plot armor. Confident daring that might be perfectly appropriate to more narrative-based games can be a quick return ticket to character generation here. Operators are mortal, and should carry themselves accordingly.

## USING THESE SYSTEMS IN PLAY

While every player is encouraged to read and understand the basics of the foregoing systems, a practical GM must recognize that the great majority of players will read and digest no more of a rulebook than they absolutely must, and often not even so much as that. A GM needs to know how to use these systems, and how to handle certain issues that are likely to crop up.

**Be willing to translate actions into rolls.** There is a certain breed of player who is fun to play with, engaged in the game, and a credit to the group... but quite unable to master specific rules. They may just not be very good at it, or they may have so little free time that they really can't afford to spend it studying rulebooks.

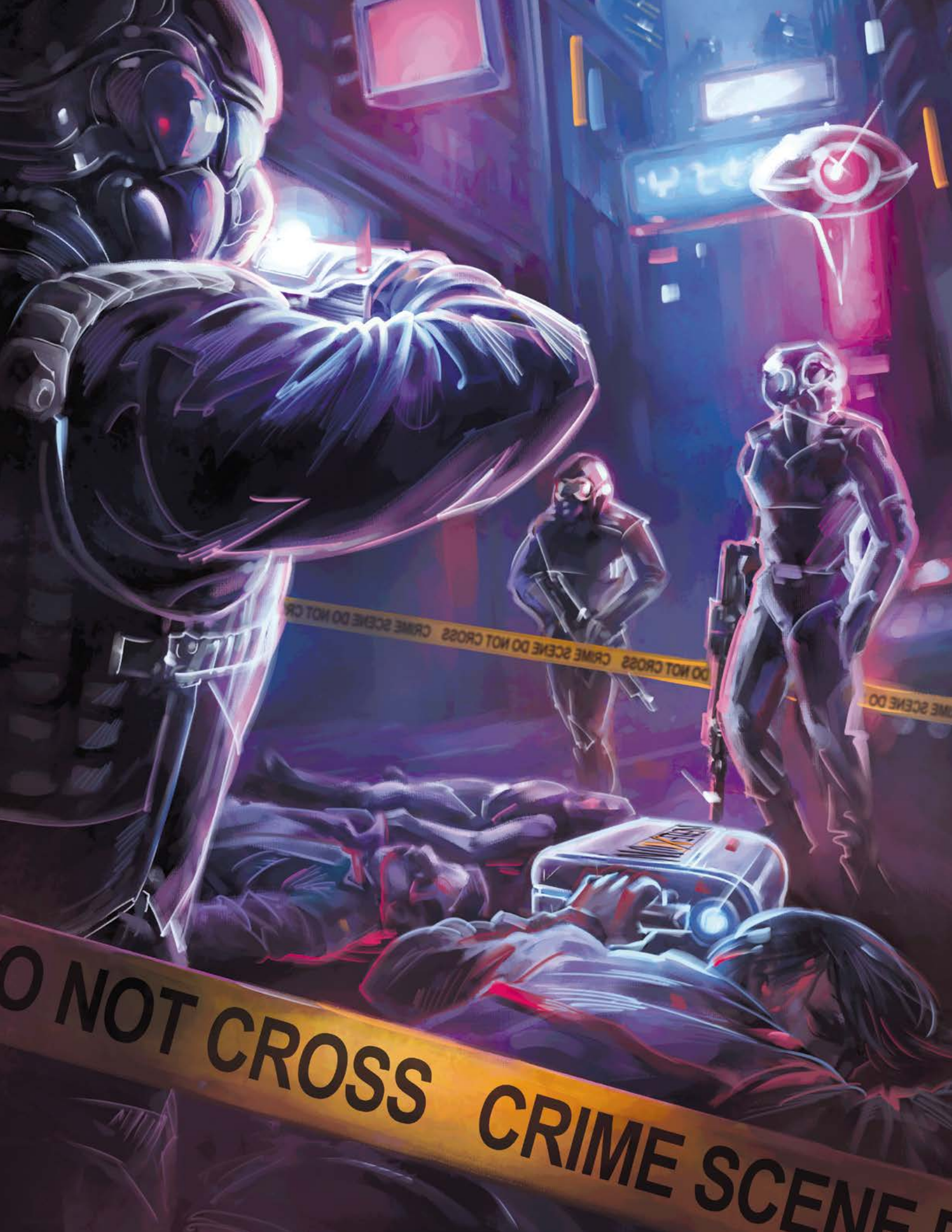
For players like these, just let them say what they're trying to do and then tell them what to roll. If they say they're shooting their pistol, just tell them to roll 1d20, see if they hit, and then tell them what damage die to roll. The player may or may not pick up the rules eventually, but you'll keep things moving quickly.

**The GM decides what is rolled.** The players always decide what their operators are trying to do, but the GM decides what they roll for it, or if any roll is possible or needed at all. A PC with Talk-4 skill may be great at persuading others of things, but they can't just decide that they're going to talk a corper CEO into resigning and then reach for their dice to roll a skill check. The GM is the one who decides if a particular action is plausible, whether it can be accomplished by a skill check at all, and if so, what the skill and difficulty will be. A PC's manner of action might make a roll harder, or easier, or even omit it entirely if their actions are particularly apposite or hopeless.

**The GM makes the rules.** While this chapter has many rules in it, not all of them will be right for every game table. Groups will dislike certain rules, and forget others, and reinterpret a few more. Just because a rule is in this book does not mean it has to exist at your table. The GM and the group know best what kind of game they want to have, and if they think a different rule ought to be used, then they're probably right. Ultimately, the GM's decision about which rules best suit the group they're working with are final, and no contradiction in this book can make them wrong.

Lastly, **hold these rules lightly.** If you can't remember a rule mid-game, then make a call that sounds reasonable and keep going. Spending five minutes digging through the chapter for an edge-case rule isn't as good as taking ten seconds to make a judgment call and playing on. There will be time to look it up afterwards and decide if the printed rule is better for future use in your game.





DO NOT CROSS CRIME SCENE



# SCENES, ROUNDS, AND MISSION TIME

Sometimes it's not necessary to track passing game time all that closely. If the PCs are just handling their business outside of a time-sensitive mission or pressing situation, they take however much time they need to do whatever it is they're trying to do.

In other situations, it becomes very important to track the passage of time in order to know how long the PCs are taking to break into a target facility, avoid discovery, or escape before alarms can bring the cops.

## SCENES

A *scene* is a time measurement used to determine how often certain abilities or actions can be taken. Some cyber can be triggered only so many times per scene, while some special abilities only work once per scene.

A scene is one particular fight, event, activity, or effort that usually doesn't take more than ten or fifteen minutes. A fight is a scene. A chase is a scene. A tense backroom negotiation is a scene. So long as the PCs are doing the same general activity in the same general location, it's probably one scene.

Most scenes don't last more than fifteen minutes, though a GM can stretch this if it seems logical. They can also shrink the time if the PCs are in some particularly action-packed situation.

## SAVING THROWS

Terrible things tend to happen to operators, but sometimes there's a slim chance to avoid an unhappy outcome. When this chance arises, a person can make a *saving throw* to avoid the calamity.

To make a saving throw, a person rolls 1d20 and tries to get equal or higher than their saving throw target. Sometimes a save might have bonuses or penalties applied to the roll, but a natural roll of 1 on the die always fails the save, and a natural roll of 20 is always a success.

### SAVING THROW TYPES

There are four types of saving throws. Usually it will be obvious which type is most appropriate for a threat, but the GM can decide in marginal situations.

**Physical saves** resist exhaustion, poisons, diseases, or other bodily afflictions. A PC's Physical saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Strength or Constitution modifiers.

**Evasion saves** apply when dodging explosions, avoiding traps, reacting to sudden peril, or other occasions where speed is of the essence. A PC's Evasion saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Dexterity or Intelligence modifiers.

## ROUNDS

A *round* measures a character's turn during combat or some other high-pressure situation, and usually lasts six seconds. A single combat scene might cover numerous rounds of fighting until the brawl is decided.

## MISSION TIME

When the PCs infiltrate a corp facility, get chased by the city cops, or are in a situation where every minute matters, time tracking shifts to *mission time*. During mission time, the GM tracks every minute of the event. The longer the PCs tarry, the more likely that security is going to twig to their presence.

Most significant activities the PCs undertake will take up about a minute of mission time. Fights, hacking attempts, hurrying to particular rooms or locations in a facility, performing first aid on a comrade, or cracking an electronic lock might all eat up a minute of mission time each. More details are given on page 172, in the mission-running guidelines.

During mission time, a new scene usually starts after every combat or after ten minutes of performing some other activity. The GM might stretch or compress this count somewhat at their discretion.

**Mental saves** apply when resisting mental cyberware hacks, psychotropic influences, psychological trauma, and other mental hazards. A PC's Mental saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level and the highest of their Wisdom or Charisma modifiers.

**Luck saves** are used when only blind chance can save a PC, regardless of their native abilities. A PC's Luck saving throw target is equal to 16 minus their character level, unmodified by their attributes.

Thus, a first-level PC with a Strength score of 14 and a Constitution score of 7 would have a Physical save target of 14: 16 base, minus one for their level, minus one for their +1 Strength modifier, as it's the best between their Strength and Constitution. If that same PC had a Dexterity of 6 and an Intelligence of 7, their Evasion save target would be 16: 16 base, minus one for their level, and minus negative one for their equally bad -1 modifier to Dexterity or Intelligence.

## NPC SAVING THROWS

To spare GM effort, non-player characters have simplified saving throws. They use only one saving throw target, which is equal to 15 minus half their rounded-down hit dice. Thus, a 3 HD NPC guard would have a universal saving throw target of 14 against all perils.

# SKILL CHECKS

Most characters are skilled, competent men and women who are perfectly capable of carrying out the ordinary duties of their role. Sometimes, however, they are faced with a situation or challenge beyond the usual scope of their role and the GM calls for a skill check.

**To make a skill check, roll 2d6 and add the most relevant skill level and attribute modifier.** If the total is equal or higher than the check's difficulty, the check is a success. On a failure, the PC either can't accomplish the feat at all, bad luck cheats them, or they achieve it at the cost of some further complication. The GM determines the specific consequence of a failure.

If the character doesn't even have level-0 in the pertinent skill, they suffer a -1 penalty to the roll. In the case of particularly technical or esoteric skills they might not even be able to attempt the skill check at all.

Some checks might be suitable for more than one skill. A gang's grenade-throwing contest might use Exert for being an athletic contest or Stab for using a thrown weapon. In such cases the PC can use the best applicable skill. In other situations, a skill might seem peripherally relevant; Drive isn't really meant to cover repairing a wrecked vehicle the way Fix is, but it's got some bearing on jury-rigging a car together. In such peripheral cases, the check difficulty usually increases by 2, and the results may not be as good at the GM's discretion.

| Difficulty | Skill Check                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6          | A relatively simple task that is still more than the PC would usually be expected to manage in their regular background. Anything easier than this isn't worth a skill check. |
| 8          | A significant challenge to a competent professional that they'd still succeed at more often than not.                                                                         |
| 10         | Something too difficult to be expected of anyone but a skilled expert, and even they might fail.                                                                              |
| 12         | Only a true master could expect to carry this off with any degree of reliability.                                                                                             |
| 14+        | Only a true master has any chance of achieving this at all, and even they will probably fail.                                                                                 |

Particularly helpful or hostile circumstances might give a bonus or penalty to the skill check. As a general rule, extremely bad circumstances or tools would apply up to a -2 penalty to the skill check, while a very good situation or the perfect set of tools might give up to a +2 bonus to the roll. Usually, no combination of modifiers should add more than +2 or -2 to any given skill check.

## WHEN TO CALL FOR A CHECK

The GM calls for skill checks, but they should only be called for challenges that fall outside the PC's background and common experience. A PC with the background of a badlands smuggler should not be rolling skill checks to maintain their car after a dust storm or figure out where to start looking for underworld fences in a district. As a general rule of thumb, if failure at a particular task would make the PC seem incompetent at their role in life, then they shouldn't have to roll a skill check for it. In addition, if failure or success at a check really doesn't matter, if it won't produce some interesting result either way, then don't roll a check.

Even concept-related feats might require a skill check, however, if the situation is especially bad or the circumstances particularly hostile. That same smuggler might have to make a Drive check to keep on the road during a dust storm, as it's the sort of situation that would test even a capable driver.

## AIDING A SKILL CHECK

Sometimes one PC will want to lend a hand to another as they attempt a difficult feat. To do this, the player first describes what sort of action they are taking to help their comrade. If the GM agrees that their effort makes sense and would be helpful, the player then rolls a relevant skill check against the same difficulty as the original check.

If it's a success, the other PC gets a +1 bonus on their roll. Multiple PCs can try to help, but the acting PC can't earn more than a +1 total bonus.

If it's a failure, there are no negative consequences. A less-skilled PC can thus try to help without risking harm to the more talented PC's efforts.

The helping skill doesn't necessarily have to be the same skill the PC is checking. If a player can think of a way to help a Sneak check with Talk, then so be it.

## OPPOSED SKILL CHECKS

Sometimes a PC wants to accomplish something that another character wants to prevent. When two efforts clash, an opposed skill check is needed.

In such cases, all participants roll their relevant skills and the highest score wins, with ties going to the PC. To make the NPC's roll, check their listed skill bonus; they can add it to any skill check appropriate to their role or profession. If the NPC has no reason to be particularly good at the challenge, they simply roll 2d6 and add nothing.

In most cases, the relevant skills are obvious. A character trying to skulk past a vigilant guard would be rolling their Dex/Sneak against the guard's roll, while one trying to out-tentacle a monster would be rolling Str/Exert. When in doubt, the GM decides.



# COMBAT

Death is always close on the streets. A single unlucky hit or fated bullet can cripple or kill, and even a veteran operator can't ignore the threat of a desperate thug with a rusty shotgun. Wise combatants don't pop their claws until there's no other option, but sometimes that choice isn't in their hands.

## THE RISKS OF VIOLENCE

Combat tends to kill people. For as predictable as this outcome may be, players can sometimes be shocked and dismayed when their operators turn out to be people, too. PCs need to understand that violence is always a gamble, and prudent operators take care to load the dice as much as possible in their favor.

At low levels, most PCs can be taken out in one good hit. It's up to them to set up their fights so that the opponents don't get the chance to make that hit. Even at higher character levels, a Traumatic Hit from a guard's rifle can easily drop a character who isn't heavily armored, so a degree of caution, prudence, and planning is necessary even for hardened professionals.

Aside from the immediate consequences of gunfire, players also have to keep in mind the longer-term effects. Corporations don't like it when operator teams kill large numbers of expensive security guards, and a team that starts leaving massacres in their wake will climb rapidly up the corporation's hit list. The Heat guidelines on page 178 hint at some of the potential consequences for PCs who have messy eating habits.

On the GM's side, it's important to remember that NPCs are people too, and ones who are fully aware of how fragile their own lives are. Corp security guards, city police, and neighborhood gangsters may fight, but they're not going to throw their lives away in blind

legions. The Morale rules on page 183 should always be kept in mind when handling fights, as there aren't a lot of selfless martyrs in a cyberpunk world.

Lastly, a GM needs to keep in mind that the combat threats and violent perils facing the PCs are set by what is logical, not by what is level-appropriate. As explained in the mission creation guidelines on page 142, a fight should involve whatever forces would logically be available. If those forces are too much for the PCs to have any chance of overcoming them, the players will need to come up with a less bloody alternative plan.

## FOR SWN AND WVN PLAYERS

Readers who are already familiar with combat rules for *Stars Without Number* or *Worlds Without Number* shouldn't find many surprises in this section. There are only a few major differences to keep in mind.

**People have both melee AC and ranged AC**, and it may be different depending on the type of armor they're wearing. NPCs might have the same Armor Class for both types to keep things simple for the GM.

**Armor sometimes has hit points**, and attacks sap armor damage soak before moving on to the wearer. Armor hit points refresh at the end of a fight, representing the wearer's luck holding out for one more brawl.

**Lethal attacks roll a Trauma Die**, and if the die is equal or greater than the victim's Trauma Target, usually 6, the damage is multiplied by the weapon's Trauma Rating. Lucky shots can be devastating.

**Permanent injuries can happen** if a target who has taken a Traumatic Hit during the fight reaches zero hit points. See page 41 for this potential consequence.



# THE COMBAT ROUND

Once the guns come out, a fight shifts into **combat rounds**. A round generally lasts six seconds, and a full fight is considered to count as one scene for the purposes of tracking special ability usage or other abilities that can only be used once per scene.

## THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

When combat begins, the engagement follows a set sequence of events.

1. If one side is completely surprised and not expecting any danger, their opponents get a free full round of actions before moving to step 2. People on active alert for danger cannot be surprised under normal circumstances.
2. Each side rolls initiative, rolling 1d8 plus the side's best Dexterity attribute modifier, if they have any. The side that rolls highest goes first, and then the others in order. PCs win ties.
3. Each member of the side gets a turn to act. PCs can act in any order the group finds agreeable. NPC sides act in whatever order the GM thinks is reasonable.
4. During a turn, a person can take one Main Action, one Move action, and as many On Turn actions as the GM thinks is plausible. Instant actions can be taken at any time, even during someone else's turn or after a roll has been made. Common actions are listed on page 34.
5. If a combatant moves away from a foe in melee without taking a *Fighting Withdrawal* action, each enemy in melee gets a free out-of-turn attack against them as they turn and flee the fight.
6. Once every member of a side has acted, the next side acts. If they've taken losses or are facing defeat, they may need to make a Morale check to keep fighting, as explained on page 183. PCs never check Morale.
7. When all sides have had their turn, the round is over and the sequence repeats from step 3. Initiative is not re-rolled.

## MAKING AN ATTACK

To make an attack, spend your Main Action and follow the steps below.

1. Roll 1d20 for your attack. Add your base hit bonus, your weapon's relevant attribute modifier, and your relevant combat skill. Good gear or special situations may add modifiers
2. If your total equals or exceeds your target's appropriate Armor Class, you inflict damage. Ranged attacks target ranged AC and melee attacks target melee AC. A natural 1 on your attack roll is always a miss and a natural 20 is always a hit, if a hit is physically possible.
3. If you hit, roll your weapon's Trauma Die, possibly modified by special abilities such as the *Killing Blow* Edge. If the roll equals or beats their Trauma Target you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit as explained on page 37.
4. If you hit, roll your weapon's damage dice and add its relevant attribute modifier. Unarmed hits using the Punch skill can also add that skill level. If you've inflicted a Traumatic Hit, multiply the total by the weapon's Trauma Rating.
5. If you miss, and your weapon's Shock rating is equal or higher than their Armor Class you still inflict Shock damage as explained on page 36. Normally, only melee weapons have a Shock rating.
6. If you inflict Shock damage, it's equal to your weapon's base Shock plus the weapon's relevant attribute modifier plus any damage modifiers that explicitly add to Shock like the *Killing Blow* Edge. Shock never causes Traumatic Hits.
7. Subtract the damage you inflicted from the target's hit points, taking them from their armor damage soak (if any) before harming the wearer. If they're reduced to zero hit points they're either dead, mortally wounded, unconscious, or stunned and helpless depending on what kind of mayhem you inflicted on them. See the rules on page 40 for handling downed PCs and foes.

A successful hit doesn't always represent a direct impact on a target; it might be a glancing blow, a bullet that forces them to duck, or a tax on their luck. Lethal attacks that really do bring a PC down to zero hit points indicate an actual physical injury.

## ACTIONS IN COMBAT

When the clock's not ticking and an operator has all the time they need to accomplish something, it doesn't matter how long it takes to do it. They can tell the GM what they want to do, and the GM will tell them how much time they need for their efforts.

In combat and other high-pressure situations, however, things become more tense, and time is usually tracked in **combat rounds**. A person can only accomplish so much in a six-second round, and this section explains how to measure those frantic efforts.

### TYPES OF ACTIONS

PCs and other creatures in combat or time-sensitive circumstances get a certain number of actions they can take each round.

**Main actions** include making an attack, executing a hack, manipulating an object, complex maneuvers, and anything else that the GM thinks shouldn't take more than six seconds to do. A combatant gets one Main action each round.

**Move actions** allow the subject to move up to their full Move rate, which is 10 meters for a normal human. Some actions that are too complex for On Turn actions but not demanding enough for Main actions might also be Moves, such as picking up an object or standing up from prone. A combatant gets one Move action each round, but can spend their Main action as an additional Move if they wish.

**On Turn actions** are quick, simple acts that take no more than a moment of time and no real concentration. Speaking a few words, falling prone, or triggering certain cyber systems might all be On Turn actions. A combatant can make as many On Turn actions in a round as the GM thinks is reasonable; a quick shout is fine, but a lengthy soliloquy may not be acceptable.

**Instant actions** are responses so quick that they can be performed at any time, even during another person's turn. Instant actions can even be triggered after dice have already been rolled. Only certain abilities are Instant actions, like the *Veteran's Luck* Edge or the activation of certain cyber systems. A combatant can trigger as many Instant actions as they have available, up to the limit of what the GM finds plausible. If multiple Instant actions are triggered in response to each other they are resolved in the order the GM finds most logical.

### EXAMPLE ACTIONS

The following actions are some of the most common that operators and their foes will undertake while under fire. Other unlisted possibilities exist, and a GM should be ready to make on-the-spot decisions about what kind of action an effort will require if the PCs come up with something novel.

#### Make a Melee Attack

#### Main Action

The combatant attacks an enemy within melee range with a fist or Readied weapon, rolling a normal hit roll and inflicting damage on a successful hit. If the attack is unarmed, it can add the user's Punch skill to the damage roll, but not the Shock. *Body Blades* and other body weaponry can use the Punch skill but do not add it to their damage. Most melee attacks inflict Shock damage on a miss, if the target's Armor Class is low enough, and no successful hit does less damage than the weapon's Shock would have done on a miss.

#### Make a Ranged Attack

#### Main Action

The combatant fires or throws a Readied ranged weapon at a target. The combatant can't *Make a Ranged Attack* with a two-handed weapon such as a rifle if there's a enemy armed with a melee weapon within melee range; it's too easy for the assailant to hinder the use of a rifle. One-handed ranged weapons and thrown weapons can still be used, albeit at a -4 penalty to hit.

#### Make a Snap Attack

#### Instant Action

A combatant with a Ready weapon can rush their attack, sacrificing accuracy for speed. The combatant must still have their Main Action impending or available. As an Instant, they can sacrifice it to make a melee or ranged attack against a foe, whether a snap shot with a bow or a quick thrust at an adjacent melee foe. This attack takes a -4 penalty to its hit roll. If multiple *Snap Attacks* go off at the same time, they are resolved simultaneously.

Snap Attacks are normally only possible for PCs and other very well-trained or talented combatants. If an opponent isn't significant enough to have been given a name, they probably shouldn't be using *Snap Attacks*.

#### Make a Swarm Attack

#### Main Action

Each assailant takes this action against a target in range of their current weapon, until up to four have done so. When the final participant has taken this action, one of the mob can elect to make an immediate melee or ranged attack against their target, gaining a +2 bonus to hit and +1 to damage for each other surviving attacker, up to +6/+3. This damage bonus does not add to Shock and it cannot drive the attack's damage over the maximum usually possible for the blow, but Shock from this attack always harms the target, even if they have a too-high AC, are using a shield, or have a Focus immunity to Shock. The sheer swarming numbers of foes are bound to inflict some kind of harm on the target provided they're not completely immune to the mob's weaponry.



|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Charge</b> | <b>Special</b> |
|---------------|----------------|

A combatant can make a wild charge before hurling a weapon or crashing into a foe, moving up to twice their normal move in a straight line before making a melee or thrown attack at +2 to hit. The charging attacker must be able to move at least 10 feet to gain momentum and suffers a -2 AC penalty for the round. Charging takes both a Move and Main Action.

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Screen an Ally</b> | <b>Move Action</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

The PC moves up to their normal Move rate towards an ally and then physically blocks opponents from attacking them, provided they remain within ten feet. Until the PC's next turn, enemies who wish to make a melee or ranged attack against the screened ally must succeed in a successful Str or Dex-based opposed skill check against the PC using the combat skill applicable to their weapon; on a failure, the attack roll is automatically directed toward the screening PC.

A PC can screen against a number of attackers in one round equal to their highest combat skill; thus, Stab-2 lets them block the attacks of two different attackers. PCs with level-0 or worse combat skills can't effectively screen. Multiple PCs can try to screen the same ally; in such a case, the attacker's skill check is compared against all blockers and the lowest-rolling successful blocker is attacked. PCs can only screen against foes and attacks they could plausibly physically parry or block with their bodies. Gunfire cannot normally be screened without integral cyber-armor.

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Total Defense</b> | <b>Instant Action</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|

As an Instant action, the combatant focuses on nothing other than avoiding knives, arrows, bullets, or other perils in the vicinity. Using *Total Defense* costs the user their Main Action for the round, and cannot be used if they've already employed their Main Action. They become immune to Shock damage for the round, including from *Swarm Attacks*, and gain a +2 bonus to their Armor Class until their next turn.

|            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| <b>Run</b> | <b>Move Action</b> |
|------------|--------------------|

The combatant moves their normal combat movement rate, which is 10 meters for most humans. If they're engaged in melee combat with an armed foe as they take this action, they need to make a *Fighting Withdrawal* first as described below or each melee enemy gets a free attack on them as they turn and flee.

|                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Make a Fighting Withdrawal</b> | <b>Main Action</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|

The combatant disengages from any melee foes around them. They don't actually move away, but they can now move away from their assailants with a Move action without giving them a free melee attack as explained above. Movement taken as part of an *Enhanced Reflexes* cyberware activation or other hyper-accelerated extra action does not require a *Fighting Withdrawal* before disengaging.

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Use a Skill</b> | <b>Main Action</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|

The combatant uses a skill that could be plausibly applied in a few seconds. An Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check to stabilize a wounded comrade is one such potential use, as is firing up a car's engine, shouting out a stirring rallying cry to timorous NPC allies, or anything else that might be done in six seconds.

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Ready or Stow an Item</b> | <b>Main Action</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|

The combatant draws a weapon, extracts an item from their pack, digs a medical kit out of a belt pouch, or otherwise moves an object around on their person. They can Ready an item this way or Stow it, as explained in the Encumbrance rules on page 48.

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Reload a Weapon</b> | <b>Main Action</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|

The combatant reloads a weapon like a pistol or rifle with a Readied magazine or a quarrel from a Readied quiver. Modern bows and crossbows can be reloaded as an On Turn action, assuming the archer has a Readied quiver and Shoot-1 skill; otherwise it's a Move action.

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Drop an Item</b> | <b>Instant Action</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|

The combatant drops something they're holding. They can do this Instantly at any time to free up their hands.

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Pick up an Item</b> | <b>Move Action</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|

The combatant can scoop an object off the floor if they have a free hand, leaving it Readied in their grip.

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Stand Up</b> | <b>Move Action</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------|

The combatant gets up from a prone position, gathering any dropped belongings. Most characters that have just been revived from unconsciousness must get up before they do much else.

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Go Prone</b> | <b>On Turn Action</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|

The combatant falls flat, forcing distant ranged attackers to take a -2 penalty to hit them. Adjacent ranged and melee enemies find them an easier target, however, gaining +2 to hit. The combatant's movement rate is halved while prone.

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Hold An Action</b> | <b>Move Action</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

By choosing to *Hold An Action*, the combatant can delay taking the rest of their actions until later in the round, activating them as an Instant action. Thus, an operator whose side wins initiative might use their Move action to *Hold An Action*. Later in the round, as an enemy rushes around a corner, he may Instantly elect to use his Main Action to *Make A Ranged Attack* with his readied pistol. If acting in response to someone else's impending action, the held action is resolved first.

## COMBAT MANEUVERS AND DEFINITIONS

The basic combat and attack sequence covers most of what brawlers are going to be doing in a given round of combat, but sometimes the situation gets a little more complicated. When the party team is ambushed in the streets, the cyber-goon wants to pin the group's hacker, or the evening's entertainment has a monomolecular surprise for her client, the details below can be helpful.

### INITIATIVE

When a side rolls initiative, they roll 1d8 and add the best Dexterity modifier among them. NPCs usually have no modifier, though the GM might give one to exceptionally quick or slow NPCs.

The side that rolls highest wins initiative, with PCs winning ties. Groups then act in initiative order, with each member acting in whatever sequence the group thinks best.

If a PC has some cyber or ability that allows them to automatically win initiative, they go first even if their side loses initiative. If two such boosted combatants oppose each other, they act in whatever order the initiative dice indicated.

While initiative by side tends to be fastest and simplest in play, some groups prefer to roll initiative individually, with each combatant rolling 1d8 and combatants acting in order from highest to lowest. As before, PCs win ties. This "individual initiative" option makes it less likely that NPC enemies will all get to go before the PCs, but it does make it harder for a team to coordinate their own actions.

### COVER AND POSITIONING

Prudent combatants tend to take cover during gunfights. The hit roll modifiers below apply in most such cases, though special situations are for the GM to judge.

When multiple penalties are applied for cover or positioning, use only the worst. Otherwise, penalties stack; trying to put a pistol round into a target who has half-ducked around a corner while his friend tries to stab you would have a hit penalty of -2 for half cover and -4 for shooting a pistol in melee for -6 total.

| Situation                                  | Mod |
|--------------------------------------------|-----|
| Shooting at a distant prone foe            | -2  |
| Attacking an adjacent prone foe            | +2  |
| Melee attacking while prone                | -4  |
| The target is at least half behind cover   | -2  |
| The target is almost completely in cover   | -4  |
| Making a thrown attack while in melee      | -4  |
| Shooting a one-handed gun while in melee   | -4  |
| Shooting a two-handed rifle while in melee | N/A |

### SHOCK DAMAGE

Some melee attacks inflict *Shock*, the inevitable harm that is done when an unarmored target is assailed by something sharp in melee range. Shock damage applies only on a miss in combat; on a hit, the weapon does its usual damage.

Shock for a weapon is listed in points of damage and the maximum AC affected. Thus "Shock 2/15" means that 2 points of damage are done to any target with AC 15 or less. More heavily-armored targets are immune to the weapon's Shock.

Assailants add their weapon's attribute modifier to Shock, along with any damage bonuses that are explicitly noted as adding to Shock. Damage bonuses that do not specifically add to Shock are omitted.

An attack never does less damage on a hit than it would do in Shock. Thus, if an attack that would normally do 4 points of Shock to AC 15 hits a target with AC 13 and rolls a 3 for damage, 4 points are done.

Brawlers using a riot shield negate the first melee Shock damage they'd otherwise take each round.

### SHOVING AND GRAPPLING

To shove a target or force them back, the attacker must first make a successful melee hit, inflicting no damage, and then succeed in an opposed Str/Punch or Str/Exert skill check. If the attacker succeeds in the skill check, the target is either forced back up to 3 meters or knocked prone at the assailant's discretion.

To grapple a foe, the attacker must first hit with an unarmed attack, doing no damage, and then both must make opposed Str/Punch skill checks. If the attacker wins, the defender is grappled and remains that way until released or until they spend a Main Action and succeed in a new opposed check. An attacker can grapple only one target at a time, though multiple attackers can cling to one defender. In such cases, the defender's skill check is compared against all of their foes.

While grappling, neither attackers or defenders can move from their current location, nor can they fight with anything but unarmed attacks. At the end of each round in which a defender remains grappled, they suffer damage from each attacker as if hit with an unarmed attack from each foe grappling them.

If the attacker wishes to move the target, they must spend a Main Action and succeed in an opposed Str/Punch skill check. If they win, the target is moved 3 meters along with them, or thrown 2 meters and knocked prone. On a loss or tie, the defender escapes.

These rules assume both targets are man-sized. Grappling or shoving significantly larger but still humanoid targets is done at a -2 penalty on all skill checks by the attacker. Doing so to creatures only barely plausible for such wrestling is done at a -4 check penalty.

## DUAL-WIELDING WEAPONS

PCs who want to dual-wield must have at least level-1 in the relevant combat skill; two pistols means Shoot-1, and a pistol and knife mean Shoot-1 and Stab-1 skills. When they attack, they must decide which of their two weapons to attack with; that weapon's modifiers will be applied to their attack roll and Shock rating. Ranged weapons expend ammunition normally for each round of dual-wielding, whether or not the wielder uses them for the attack roll.

Dual-wielding grants a +2 damage bonus on all hits on targets within range of both weapons; if using a knife and gun, this means foes in melee range, while dual pistols could get the bonus on anyone in range of the guns. This damage bonus applies only to successful hits, and not to Shock damage.

Managing both weapons is difficult, however, and all attack rolls made while dual-wielding take a -1 hit penalty.

## EXECUTION ATTACKS

Sometimes an assailant has the luxury of a completely unsuspecting victim. An **execution attack** gives the attacker the opportunity to take them down in a single swift strike, regardless of how tough and heavily-cybered they might be.

A target is only vulnerable to an execution attack if they feel perfectly safe. A guard standing a tedious watch at some quiet post might qualify, but if she knows intruders are present she'd be too alert. A VIP surrounded by bodyguards might feel at ease, but if shots have just been fired, he'll be too alert to danger to be caught sufficiently unawares.

If the target is vulnerable, the would-be assassin must spend a full minute setting up the hit. This may involve carefully aiming their rifle, drifting innocently closer amid a crowd, or watching their bodyguards for a moment of inattention. Any combat or other disturbance during this time will spoil the strike.

Once the hit is set up, the assassin can strike as a Main Action. Melee attacks automatically hit, regardless of the target's Armor Class. Ranged attacks require a Dex/Shoot skill check against difficulty 6 for point-blank shots, 8 for those at normal range, or 10 for one at a weapon's long range. An operator can use the *Veteran's Luck* Edge with this shot, but it only allows a reroll on a failed check rather than a certain hit.

If the execution attack hits, the target must make an immediate Physical save at a penalty equal to the attacker's combat skill level. If they fail, they are Mortally Wounded on the spot, or knocked unconscious if the attacker was using a non-lethal attack.

If the save succeeds, they still take damage from the attack. Successful execution attacks always count as Traumatic Hits, and the multiplied damage or Major Injury might well be enough to kill the target anyway.

## TRAUMATIC HITS AND TRAUMA TARGETS

High-powered weaponry and fragile human bodies do not mix. Sometimes, a particularly unlucky strike can inflict a **Traumatic Hit**.

The odds of a lethal attack inflicting such a hit depend on the target's **Trauma Target**. A normal creature's Trauma Target is 6; this can be modified by cyberware or heavy armor.

Heavy armor and certain cyberware and special abilities can modify the user's Trauma Target. For some weapons, this might mean there's no chance of inflicting a Traumatic Hit. Trauma Target bonuses from different sources stack, so a +1 from the *Hard To Kill* Edge stacks with the +3 from wearing a suit of heavy armor for a final Trauma Target of 10.

Every weapon has a **Trauma Die** listed for it along with a **Trauma Rating** multiplier. When an attack hits a living creature, the assailant rolls this die. If the total is equal or greater than the victim's Trauma Target, it's a Traumatic Hit, and the total damage they inflict with the blow is multiplied by the Trauma Rating.

For example, if Skinny Lou shivs an unarmored troublemaker and rolls a 6 on her knife's 1d6 Trauma Die, she's inflicted a Traumatic Hit. She rolls 1d4 for the knife's damage, adds her +1 Dexterity attribute modifier for the weapon, and adds an additional +2 damage from the custom monomolecular mods her friend installed on it. The total damage is 6, which is multiplied by the knife's x3 Trauma Rating for a total of 18 points of damage. The thug's belly is unzipped in a single smooth stroke and he is no longer Lou's problem.

Non-lethal attacks don't roll the Trauma Die unless the attacker wants to do so, which turns the attack lethal. Unarmed attacks aren't usually at risk of murder, but if somebody wants to bounce a victim's skull off the curb, killing them is a real possibility.

Drones, vehicles, robots, and other large inanimate objects are immune to Traumatic Hits from weapons that could not plausibly inflict real damage on them at the GM's discretion.

Someone brought to zero hit points in the same fight they took a Traumatic Hit runs the risk of suffering major injury, as explained on page 41. This applies even if the Traumatic Hit itself didn't put them down but they were felled by a later injury.

## LESS-LETHAL ATTACKS

To make a less-lethal attack, the assailant has to be using a weapon that could plausibly inflict non-lethal damage. Clubs, fists, shock prods, staves, or other weapons would be suitable, while combat rifle rounds would not.

Attackers striking to subdue a target this way make their attacks normally, but do not roll the Trauma Die. Victims brought to zero hit points this way are alive but unconscious, helpless, stunned, or otherwise incapacitated as the assailant wishes.



## EXAMPLES OF COMBAT

To help new readers understand how combat might play out in their campaigns, a few example encounters are provided here. The operator team involved in them has two members, both first level PCs.

### CALCULATING COMBAT INFORMATION

As an illustration, let's walk through the process of recording the combat stats for a couple of example first-level operators.

**Duchess** is a stealth and technical expert. She's not heavily invested in combat expertise, but she has the basic tools for self-defense; she picked the Tech starting equipment package on page 25.

The package gives her a light pistol. Her hit roll bonus with the gun is equal to her base hit bonus of +0, then +1 for her Dex modifier, since Dexterity is the attribute used with light pistols, and then +1 for her Shoot-1 skill, for +2 total.

The gun's base damage is 1d6, to which she adds +1 from her Dex modifier, for 1d6+1 total. It has a Trauma Die of 1d8, which she rolls alongside each attack. If it equals or exceeds the target's Trauma Target on a hit, they take x2 damage from the Traumatic Hit.

She's also got a knife. Her hit bonus with it is +0 base, +1 from Dex as a knife can use either Dex or Str modifiers, and then -2 because she lacks even Stab-0 skill for a total modifier of -1. She's not exactly an expert knife fighter.

The knife's damage is 1d4, +1 for her Dexterity modifier, for a total of 1d4+1. Its Trauma Die is 1d6, and it does x3 damage on a Traumatic Hit. Being a melee weapon, it also does Shock damage; her Shock with it is 1 for the weapon's base value, +1 for her Dexterity mod, for a total of 2. She inflicts it on anyone with AC 15 or less when she misses an attack on them, so if her enemy is lightly-armored it can be worth her while to try to stab him even with her poor knife skills.

Being a novice operator with 1d6 hit points, Duchess ended up with a roll of 3. Since even a knife does 1d4 damage, it behooves her to avoid fighting where she can, and if she can't, to make sure she sets it up to her advantage.

Duchess didn't get any armor with her starting gear package, so she has to settle for ordinary clothing. Thus, her melee and ranged Armor Class are both equal to 10, the base value, +1 for her Dexterity, for a total of 11.

**Morton Fuller** is an ex-City Records Department clerk who found a new career as a cybernetic street merc after failed mandatory productivity neurosurgery. While he suffers from severe issues with long-term memory and hypothetical event modeling, he has absolutely no problem dismembering people with the body blades he bought with his *Wired* Edge. While he lacks Duchess' practical skills, he's a fearsome brawler.

He's taken the Cutter starting cyberware package with his *Wired* funds, which equips him with a *Body Blades II* system. His hit bonus with it is +0 base, +1 for his Str bonus, since the blades can use either Str or Dex, +1 for his Punch-1 skill, for a total of +2.

His damage is 2d6 plus his Str modifier, plus one for his *Killing Blow* Edge, for 2d6+2 total. It has a 1d8 Trauma Die, +1 for *Killing Blow*, for 1d8+1 total, and a x3 multiplier on a Traumatic Hit. Compounding that, it has a base Shock of 2, +1 from Strength, +1 from *Killing Blow*, for 4 points against AC 15 or less. Most ordinary thugs are going to get eviscerated by Mort even on a missed hit roll, unless they're armored or abnormally tough.

Mort took the Badlander gear package, as he doesn't really need any melee weapons, and the rifle in the package looked useful in case the fight is outside melee range. Unfortunately, Mort is clumsy, with a -1 Dexterity mod, and has absolutely no skill with firearms. His hit bonus is +0 base, -1 Dex, and -2 for no Shoot skill, for -3 total. His damage with it is 1d10+2 base, -1 for Dex, +1 for *Killing Blow*, for 1d10+2 total. Its Trauma Die is 1d8, +1 for *Killing Blow*, for 1d8+1 and a x3 multiplier.

His *Dermal Armor* cyber system gives him a base Armor Class of 16 versus melee and ranged attacks, modified by -1 for his Dex modifier. At least the system gives him a +1 bonus to his Trauma Target, from the base 6 to 7, making it harder for him to suffer a Traumatic Hit.

While Mort is a walking engine of monomolecular death, he still has 1d6 hit points, +1 for his Con modifier. In his case, that's 3 points. He can reduce a corp security guard to a red smear in a heartbeat, but a pistol round that gets past his dermal armor is probably going to put him down. If he's prudent, he won't give a gunman that chance.

### A SUDDEN BRAWL

Morton and Duchess are having a discussion with three members of the Salt Boys when Duchess lets slip that they're working with the gang's arch-rivals. The furious gangers reach for their guns and combat begins.

Both sides roll initiative, rolling 1d8 plus their best Dex modifier. For the PCs, that's Duchess with her +1 Dex. They roll a 5. Unfortunately, the gangers roll an 8. Being NPCs, they don't usually have any Dex modifier, but 8 is still enough to win initiative. The gangers get to act first.

Morton can't afford to let that happen, so he takes a *Snap Attack* action. This special action lets him attack right now, out of initiative order, though it costs him his next Main Action and applies a -4 penalty to his hit roll.

Morton doesn't care. He can see these thugs are wearing nothing heavier than street leathers, and his Shock damage is sure to go through even on a miss. As it turns out, he rolls a 16, +2 for his hit bonus, -4 for the *Snap Attack*, for a final total of 14. The street leathers the gangers are wearing have a melee AC of 12, so he hits.

Morton rolls 2d6+2 for damage, and a 1d8+1 Trauma Die at the same time. The damage dice roll a 9 and the Trauma Die rolls 6. That's enough to make a Traumatic Hit, so the damage is multiplied by the blade's x3 rating, for 27 points of damage.

Street leathers have a damage soak of 3 points, absorbing the first 3 points of damage the wearer takes in each fight. Unfortunately, the thug's 3 hit points then absorb the following 24 points of damage. The GM decides that there's no way the ganger is living even a moment after that kind of slaughter, and describes the way Morton neatly bisects the goon horizontally. If it were lighter overkill or the ganger were someone important, he might've made it out as merely Mortally Wounded, dying in a few rounds if no one helped him.

Duchess considers taking a *Snap Attack* too, but she's within melee range of the gangers, so they'd be able to get up in her face and apply a further -4 penalty to her pistol's hit roll. She'd have almost no chance of hitting with that, so she holds off and waits her turn to act.

Since one of their comrades has just died horribly, the gangers need to make a Morale check. They need to do this the first time an ally dies, when half their number are down, or when some terrifying event happens on the battlefield. The GM rolls 2d6 and gets an 8, comparing it to the gangers' Morale score of 7. It's over, so the gangers break. Being undisciplined fighters, they simply turn tail and move to flee back down the alleyway.

Unfortunately, one of them is still within melee range of Morton. Because the ganger is running all out and not taking a *Fighting Withdrawal* action, Morton gets a free attack against him as he turns his back. Mort rolls a 2, however, missing the thug. His 4 points of Shock damage still applies, however, erasing the damage soak of the thug's street armor and inflicting 1 point of damage on the ganger. He had 5 hit points, so he escapes with a long gash across his back.

It's now the PC's turn. Duchess pulls her pistol and squeezes off a round at a fleeing thug, rolling 10, +2 for her hit bonus. That's enough to hit the thug's ranged AC 12. She rolls 5 points on the pistol damage, but her Trauma die comes up 7, hitting the thug's base Trauma Target of 6 and doubling the damage. The thug's damage soak can't save him, and he goes down, Mortally Wounded and dying.

Mort took a *Snap Attack*, so he's lost his Main Action for the round. His target is 20 meters away, having fled last round. What can Mort do to catch him before he lets the Salt Boys learn about their betrayal?

He can activate his *Enhanced Reflexes I* cyber as an On Turn action, gaining a point of System Strain and a bonus Main Action as he explodes into neuro-stimulated motion. He uses the *Charge* combat action, spending his Main and Move actions to close with his fleeing target and attack.

The GM doesn't even bother asking him to roll to hit, because his Shock damage alone is going to be enough to kill the thug. Now all the operators have to do is hide the bodies and hope nobody affiliated with the Salt Boys saw their little disagreement.

## A ROOFTOP SNIPER

Duchess and Mort have been pinned down by a sniper perched on a nearby building. Mort's passed his rifle over to Duchess, since she's the better shot, and she's given him her pistol. Both are hunkered down behind a dumpster, and they don't have much time before gang reinforcements show up. With a few hurried words, they make a hasty plan as their turn comes up.

Mort acts first. He's got the better armor, so he makes a wild rush across the alley to the corner of the building nearby, leaning around it to blaze away at the gunman with his pistol in a *Swarm Attack* supporting Duchess. His covering fire has got no chance of hitting, but his *Swarm Attack* gives Duchess a +2 hit bonus and a +1 damage bonus on his target.

Duchess then leans around the dumpster, aims the rifle, and is about to pull the trigger when the sniper realizes his peril. He's an expert gunman, so the GM decides he's skilled enough to pull off a *Snap Attack* at Duchess. The GM decides that the two gunners fire simultaneously.

Duchess rolls a 13 on the hit roll, +2 for her hit bonus, +2 for the *Swarm Attack*, hitting the sniper's ranged AC 15 plus his +2 bonus for being in partial cover. She rolls 1d10+3, +1 for the *Swarm Attack*, for 12 points of damage. Her Trauma Die only comes up a 1, so no Traumatic Hit was inflicted. Even so, 12 points of damage is enough to kill the sniper.

Unfortunately, the sniper's *Snap Attack* still goes through, and the deceased ganger rolls a modified 14, +3 for his hit bonus, easily hitting Duchess' AC of 11, +2 for partial cover. His rifle rolls 8 points of damage, reducing Duchess to 0 hit points and Mortally Wounding her. At least there was no Traumatic Hit.

With combat over for the moment, Mort rushes to her side and fumbles with the Trauma Patch he got with his starting kit. He can stabilize her with an Int or Dex/Heal skill check at difficulty 6. Unfortunately, the best of those attributes for Mort has a -1 modifier, and he has no Heal skill, so he takes a further -1 modifier. He rolls 2d6 and gets a 7; at -2, that's not enough for the patch to work.

Now Mort is without medical tools, without skills, and with only 5 more rounds to plug the hole before Duchess bleeds out in a dirty alleyway. If she lives, she may choose to adjust her risk thresholds.

# INJURY, HEALING, AND SYSTEM STRAIN

The medical technology of most cyberpunk settings can allow humans to survive injuries that would be certain doom in other genres. Even so, such synthetic vitality comes at a cost.

## MORTALLY WOUNDED AND STABILIZING

A creature reduced to zero hit points by a lethal attack is dead or dying. Ordinary NPCs or unremarkable creatures will generally die on the spot. PCs and those NPCs important enough to have deserved a name will be **Mortally Wounded**.

A Mortally Wounded creature is helpless, unable to do anything but scream, writhe, or lie unconscious. At the end of the sixth round after they were downed, they will die. They will die instantly if they take any further hit point damage.

An ally can attempt to stabilize a Mortally Wounded companion. Doing so is generally an Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check, one requiring a Main Action.

The difficulty for this skill check is 8 plus the number of full rounds since the target was downed. If the medic lacks a medkit, the difficulty for this skill check is increased by 2. Only one ally can try to stabilize a target in any given round, though others can attempt to aid their skill check, and a failed check can be re-attempted the next round.

Once stabilized, the target recovers with 1 hit point after ten minutes of rest, and can rise and act normally thereafter. They count as **Frail**, however, and will remain Frail until they have had at least a week of bed rest. Frail PCs cannot heal damage through natural healing and will die immediately if brought to zero hit points again.

A medic can try to remove the Frail condition with a medkit, an hour's work, and a skill check against difficulty 10. They only get one chance to remove a given Frailty.

## NATURAL HEALING

A wounded creature can recover some measure of strength and vitality with a good night's rest. Provided they are fed, warm, and reasonably comfortable, a non-Frail creature will recover their character level or hit dice in HP each morning.

Frail creatures do not regain HP through natural healing, requiring a full week of bed rest and the regular care of a medic with Heal-0 skill and a medkit in order to shake the condition. Those without this level of care must make a Physical save after a week; on a failure, they die in the next few days, while on a success, they need another month of recovery to lose their frailty.

## FIRST AID

Modern combat medicine can work marvels, provided the user isn't worried about the long-term carcinogenic qualities of the drugs or their unfortunately frequent psychological side-effects. Few operators concern themselves with such irrelevant details.

By spending a few minutes tending an ally, a medic with a medkit can heal 1d6 HP of damage on a target, plus their Heal skill level. If they have no Heal skill at all, they roll 1d6-1 instead. Each such application adds one System Strain to the target.

A single application of first aid takes one minute of mission time. First aid can restore hit points to a Frail target, but cannot get rid of the Frail quality.

## SYSTEM STRAIN

A given human body can withstand only so much biochemical manipulation at once. Healing, cybernetic implants, certain poisons, some diseases, or even natural privation and hardship can all build up **System Strain** in a subject.

A character's maximum System Strain is equal to their Constitution attribute. Thus, someone with a Constitution of 13 could accumulate up to 13 points of System Strain. This strain is usually lost at a rate of one point for every night of good, refreshing sleep.

Healing often adds to a target's System Strain, whether as first aid or as the effect of some biomedical compound. If the target is already at its maximum System Strain, it can't handle the additional stress and gets no benefit from the effect or attempting healing.

Cyberware implants also usually permanently increase a subject's System Strain. Points earned by implants or other permanent modifications cannot be shed; they remain until the implant is removed. Particularly harsh or opulent lifestyles can also modify System Strain maximums, as given on page 51.

## POISONS AND DISEASES

Most toxins force a victim to make a Physical saving throw to resist their effects or mitigate their harm. Weak perils might grant as much as a +4 to the saving throw, while dire threats might apply a -4 penalty.

If the save is failed, the poison or disease takes hold. Most poisons act quickly, inflicting hit point damage, adding System Strain to the target, or applying long-lasting penalties. Diseases can have a slower onset but often apply the same sort of harms.

A medic who gets to a poisoned person within a minute of the poisoning can use a medkit to give them a better chance to resist. They may add twice their Heal skill level to the victim's saving throw roll, or +1 if they have only Heal-0 skill. Specialized antitoxins may be able to neutralize such poisons entirely.



## MAJOR INJURIES AND DAMAGING CYBERWARE

When a PC becomes Mortally Wounded in the same scene in which they took a Traumatic Hit, they run the risk of suffering a serious, lasting injury. This risk applies even if they endured the original Traumatic Hit without dropping to zero hit points; further damage in the same scene can push them over the edge into serious medical peril.

When a PC hits zero hit points after taking a Traumatic Hit in the same scene, they need to make a Physical saving throw. If they pass, they are still Mortally Wounded but in no danger of permanent debilitation, assuming someone can stabilize them before they die. If they fail, they need to roll on the major injuries table.

The victim rolls 1d12 on the table, but certain special effects or situations may add bonuses or subtract penalties from the roll. A roll less than 1 is counted as 1 and a roll greater than 12 is counted as 12.

Abilities and meds that stabilize a subject with a major injury can keep them from bleeding out immediately, but dealing with the injury itself will require serious work by a street doc.

### DAMAGING CYBERWARE

Many major injuries damage cyberware located in the body part that was crippled by the blow. Such damaged cyberware is useless until it has been repaired by someone with at least Fix-0 and Heal-0 skills. If the cyberware is necessary to preserve the user's life somehow, it functions just enough to avoid death, but not well enough to do any good.

Repairing damaged cyberware takes one day per damaged system and costs 20% of the systems' original cost in maintenance parts. A cyberdoc kit at a minimum is necessary to perform the repairs. Paired cyber implants such as cybereyes or synthears are treated as a single system and repaired as a single system.

### PROSTHETIC SYSTEMS CYBER

Rather than itemize every artificial liver, heart patch, synthetic kidney, and rerouted intestinal tract, these medical implements are all represented as the *Prosthetic Cyber* system. Some major injuries require the implantation of this cyber if the subject is to have a normal life.

The quality of the implant varies with the expense, as given on page 72. In addition, the unfortunate patient needs to pay for implant surgery as well. Fortunately, as these systems are meant to simply support damaged tissue rather than provide any form of augmentation, there is no real chance of surgery failure barring some specially terrible conditions.

Multiple major injuries may require multiple implants of this cyber, each one supporting a different damaged organ or internal system.

### MAJOR INJURIES

| d12   | Injury                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | <b>Instant Death:</b> Wrong place, wrong time. You're not coming back from this.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2     | <b>Internal Damage:</b> You're dead in an hour if you don't get to a street doc's clinic. You're in a coma until you install a <i>Prosthetic Cyber</i> implant. Any Body or Nerves location cyber you have is critically damaged. |
| 3     | <b>Brain Damage:</b> You're in a coma until you install a <i>Prosthetic Cyber</i> implant. Any Head or Nerves location cyber you have is critically damaged.                                                                      |
| 4     | <b>Eye Damage:</b> You're blind until you get a pair of cybereyes. If you already have cybereyes, they and any implants in them are critically damaged.                                                                           |
| 5     | <b>Gut Wound:</b> If you don't get to a street doc's clinic in an hour, you suffer a -1 penalty to your Con modifier until you get a <i>Prosthetic Cyber</i> implant.                                                             |
| 6     | <b>Right Leg Ruined*:</b> You can crawl at best once stabilized.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 7     | <b>Left Leg Ruined*:</b> As above, but for your left leg.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 8     | <b>Right Arm Ruined*:</b> You've only got one functional hand.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9     | <b>Left Arm Ruined*:</b> As above, but for your left arm.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10    | <b>System Damage:</b> Your most System Strain-expensive implant has been critically damaged. If several tie, the GM picks one.                                                                                                    |
| 11-12 | <b>Just a Flesh Wound:</b> It's not that bad of a hit after all.                                                                                                                                                                  |

\*: Any Limb cyber exclusively and entirely located in the ruined limb, such as a *Cyberarm* system, is also damaged by the injury. Limb systems split over multiple limbs are not disabled.

It is also possible to repair these damaged systems with actual vat-grown replacement tissues and patient-donor cloned organs. Every such effort is a custom project requiring a Contact with access to a major hospital or a biotech-oriented corp, and even when such organizations are willing to do the work, the entire surgical process can easily cost upwards of \$100,000 per major injury. Such repairs incur no System Strain cost, however, and can usually be completed in a month.

# VEHICLE COMBAT

Combat between vehicles works much like personal-scale combat. Participating drivers roll initiative, gunners fire mounted weapons, and vehicles take hit point damage from successful hits. Even so, there are a few special qualities to keep in mind.

## VEHICLE COMBAT SEQUENCE

Fights involving vehicles use a similar combat sequence to more human-scale brawls.

- **Drivers roll initiative.** Each vehicle is its own side in combat, with any passengers acting on their driver's initiative.
- **Each vehicle's driver and their passengers act** when their turn comes up in the round, in whatever order they choose.
- **The driver must usually spend a Main Action maintaining control** of the vehicle during each round of combat. If they can't and no one can grab the wheel in that same round, the driver must make a Luck save; on a failure, the vehicle crashes, while on a success merely halts.
- **Each vehicle weapon requires a gunner.** Somebody or something has to take a Main Action to fire a vehicle weapon. Firing unsecured personal weapons out the window takes a -4 hit penalty when the vehicle is moving.
- **Vehicles have their own Armor Class**, applied to both ranged and melee attacks, and reflects both its defensive plating and its natural agility when driven at speed. This AC is increased by its driver's Drive skill when in operation. A stationary vehicle takes a -4 AC penalty.
- **Some vehicles have an Armor rating.** This rating is subtracted from any damage done to the vehicle. Even for unarmored vehicles, however, the GM is within their rights to decide that some weapons simply can't reasonably hurt the machine.
- **Vehicles reduced to zero hit points by enemy weapons are destroyed**, as described below, and the passengers also take crash damage if the vehicle was in motion at the time.

Vehicle movement is abstracted, and it's assumed that all participating vehicles are close enough to shoot at each other. If one or more wants to flee, they use the pursuit rules on the facing page. Vehicles penned in by the terrain or enemy positions may need some fancy driving maneuvers to even get the chance to flee.

## VEHICLE DESTRUCTION

A vehicle that crashes or is reduced to zero hit points is destroyed. Any occupants take damage as if they were also hit by whatever took out the vehicle, with a Luck save for half. Thus, if a rocket launcher inflicted 18 points of damage on a car and blew it to pieces, the passengers would also take 18 points of damage, with a Luck save to halve it.

## VEHICLE CRASHES

If the vehicle was moving at combat speeds at the time it was destroyed or goes out of control, the passengers also take **crash damage**. Each rolls both a Physical save and a Luck save. If they make both, they survive largely unscathed. If they fail one, they take half their maximum hit points in damage, which may leave them Mortally Wounded. If they fail both, they are Mortally Wounded and will suffer a major injury if they survive.

## VEHICLES AND TRAUMATIC HITS

Vehicles are immune to Traumatic Hits from any weapon not specifically noted as being able to inflict them. In some cases, even that may not be sufficient; a GM is within their rights to decide that an ordinary anti-materiel rifle isn't going to be shooting out the engine block of a main battle tank.

Some weapons can reasonably inflict Traumatic Hits on a vehicle. Each vehicle type has its own Trauma Target, never less than 6 and often much higher.

A vehicle that takes a Traumatic Hit from such weapons takes the multiplied damage as usual. If the damage is enough to destroy the vehicle, the unlucky passengers are also subject to this multiplied damage when making their Luck saves.

## VEHICLE MANEUVERS AND RAMMING

A driver who wants to accomplish a stunt can do so as part of the Main Action they spend controlling the vehicle for the round. These maneuvers may be an attempt to open up a route of escape, to get cover from enemy fire, to cut off a specific enemy vehicle, or to jump Snake River Canyon. This is normally resolved with a skill check at a difficulty set by the GM. Checks made against a driver, such as an attempt to skid out of a vehicle's line of fire, may be made as opposed checks.

Ramming a human-sized target is generally only possible in confined areas such as narrow streets. The driver and target make opposed Dex/Drive and Dex/Exert skill checks. If the driver wins, the target must make an Evasion save or take the vehicle's maximum HP in damage, with a Trauma Die of 1d12/x3. Ramming a vehicle also takes an opposed check, albeit with no Evasion save allowed. The ramming vehicle also takes damage as if the target vehicle rammed it in turn.

# CHASES AND PURSUIT

Whether dashing through crowded night markets on foot or throwing clouds of dust in a badlands smuggler's rig, operators have a habit of fleeing. In some cases the outcome of their flight will be obvious, given the circumstances, but in others a little finer judgment is required.

## FOOT CHASES

One group can run from another whenever a moment's pause exists; when enemies have failed a Morale check, when patrollers suddenly come upon unexpected intruders, or when some distraction has bought the party a moment's inattention from their enemies.

- **The fleeing party runs.** The group member with the best Dex/Exert or Con/Exert rolls a skill check. The result is the fleeing group's pace, as it's assumed that they help and encourage the slower members.
- **Other group members hinder pursuit,** if they can think of something useful to do. Sometimes a skill check is needed, while other times a GM will simply decide it works. Each successful effort adds a +1 bonus to the pace, up to +3 maximum. Botched efforts are either unhelpful or apply a -1 penalty if they're actively harmful. If the fleeing group is made up of NPCs, it's the GM's judgment as to whether any of them try to do something clever to stall the PCs.
- **The pursuing group makes a single Dex/Exert or Con/Exert skill check,** modified by the pursuit modifiers in the table below.

If the pursuers beat the fleeing group's modified roll, they catch up with them. If they fail, the fleeing party has escaped any immediate pursuit.

| Foot Pursuer Check Modifiers              | Mod      |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|
| There are more pursuers than pursued      | -1       |
| The pursued have no head start at all     | +2       |
| " have one round's head start             | +1       |
| " have less than a minute's head start    | +0       |
| " have more than a minute's head start    | -2       |
| Who knows the local terrain better?       | -2 to +2 |
| The pursuit is half-hearted or obligatory | -1       |
| The pursuers are enraged or vengeful      | +1       |

## VEHICLE CHASES

Vehicle chases work a little differently, as the entire group's progress rests entirely on the capability of their getaway driver.

- **The fleeing vehicle runs.** The driver makes a Drive skill check, usually modified by Dexterity. They add the vehicle's Speed rating to this roll.
- **The fleeing vehicle does something to hinder pursuit,** if the driver or their passengers can think of something useful. Assuming any necessary skill checks are passed, the vehicle gains a GM-determined bonus to their roll, from +1 for most efforts, up to +3 for brilliant maneuvers.
- **Each pursuing vehicle makes a Dex/Drive skill check,** adding their vehicle's Speed rating and any vehicle pursuit modifiers noted below. Any of them who don't equal or match the fleeing vehicle's roll fall behind and are lost from pursuit.

Successful pursuers catch up, and the situation likely shifts to vehicle combat until one side is halted, flees successfully, or surrenders.

| Vehicle Pursuer Check Modifiers             | Mod      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|
| The pursuer can't directly see the pursued  | -2       |
| The pursuer is flying but the pursued isn't | +3       |
| The pursued is flying but the pursuer isn't | -3       |
| A spotter is relaying the target's position | +1       |
| Who knows the local terrain better?         | -2 to +2 |
| The pursuit is half-hearted or obligatory   | -1       |
| The pursuers are enraged or vengeful        | +1       |

## HYBRID CHASES

If a group on foot is chasing a vehicle, they automatically fail unless the vehicle is somehow forced into tight confines, driven into obstacles, or otherwise hampered.

If a group in vehicles is chasing a group on foot, they'll automatically succeed unless the targets flee into buildings, narrow alleyways, sewer entrances, or other places that the vehicles can't go.



# CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

When characters accumulate enough experience points, they advance a *character level*. New operators start out at level one and the most experienced, capable agents in world reach level ten. While even greater levels of skill may exist in some campaign settings, *Cities Without Number* assumes that tenth level is as high as most games will go.

## GAINING EXPERIENCE POINTS

To advance in capability, PCs need to earn *experience points*. Once they accumulate enough experience, they can advance to the next character level, representing the sharpening of their skills and their growing history as an operator. Experience points earned are cumulative, and do not reset each level.

Operators usually gain experience points by succeeding at missions, with a successful mission suitable for someone of their capabilities awarding 3 experience points. Failure means fewer points, or even none, while conquering challenges that agents of their ability couldn't normally be expected to overcome might earn a bonus.

Other campaigns might grant XP for other activities, such as succeeding in personal goals, harming some campaign-wide nemesis, or obtaining fabulous sums of money. The GM guide starting on page 176 discusses other possibilities that might suit a group.

The adjacent table indicates how many experience points need to be earned before a PC can advance to that level. Once the requisite number of XP are earned, the operator gains their new level and all the benefits, improving them as soon as they get a day or two of downtime.

Experience Needed to Gain a Level

| Level | Fast Leveling | Slow Leveling |
|-------|---------------|---------------|
| 1     | 0             | 0             |
| 2     | 3             | 6             |
| 3     | 6             | 15            |
| 4     | 12            | 24            |
| 5     | 18            | 36            |
| 6     | 27            | 51            |
| 7     | 39            | 69            |
| 8     | 54            | 87            |
| 9     | 72            | 105           |
| 10    | 93            | 139           |

## ADVANCEMENT RATES

The table above shows two different leveling rates. One is a "fast" rate meant for campaigns where the GM wants the PCs to rapidly grow in power and capability. The other is a "slow" rate more suitable for long-term campaigns where more time is desired between advancement opportunities.

The GM decides which table to use for their campaign, and may change the table based on their own experience and the preferences of the group. Choices should be made based on what best suits the table and their interests, and a GM should be willing to tweak things as needed. For example, some players prefer to move quickly into the mid-levels, but want to linger there instead of advancing rapidly to the endgame.

## BENEFITS OF ADVANCEMENT

Once a PC has been awarded enough experience points to reach the next level, they immediately gain the benefits of advancement. No special training is required as their abilities are assumed to have been honed by their missions over the past level.

### ROLL ADDITIONAL HIT POINTS

First, they become harder to overcome in combat. To determine their new maximum hit points, they roll 1d6 for each character level they possess. If they have the *Hard to Kill* Edge, they roll 1d6+2 for each. To each of these dice, they add their Constitution modifier, whether a bonus or a penalty. If the total roll is greater than their current maximum hit points, they take the roll. If less or equal, their maximum hit points increase by one.

For example, Skinny Lou just made it to third level. She's a sickly young thing with a Constitution score

of 6, giving her a -1 attribute modifier, but she's got the *Hard to Kill* Edge for +2 on each hit point die. She'd roll 3d6+3 to find her new maximum. If it's greater than her current total of 10, she'd use it. If equal or less, her new maximum HP will be 11 instead.

Maximum hit points are rerolled each level in order to soften the consequences of a single level's bad roll. If your operator can live long enough to advance, they always have a chance to undo their bad luck.

### IMPROVE SAVING THROWS

The PC becomes more capable of evading chance harms and perils. Their saving throw scores decrease by one, making it easier to succeed on saving throws by rolling equal or over it. As a first level character has saving throw scores of 15, reaching second level would lower them to 14, modified by their appropriate attributes.

## IMPROVE ATTACK BONUS

A PC's base attack bonus improves according to their level. Most characters have a basic attack bonus equal to half their character level, rounded down. If they have the *On Target* Edge, their bonus is equal to their full character level. The table below provides a summary of these numbers.

| Character Attack Bonus |              |                |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Level                  | Normal Bonus | On Target Edge |
| 1                      | +0           | +1             |
| 2                      | +1           | +2             |
| 3                      | +1           | +3             |
| 4                      | +2           | +4             |
| 5                      | +2           | +5             |
| 6                      | +3           | +6             |
| 7                      | +3           | +7             |
| 8                      | +4           | +8             |
| 9                      | +4           | +9             |
| 10                     | +5           | +10            |

## GAIN AND SPEND SKILL POINTS

A PC who advances a level gains three *skill points* they can spend on improving their skills or save to spend later. Operators with the *Educated* Edge gain an extra bonus skill point to spend, giving them four points each time they advance.

Skills that are gained or improved immediately on gaining a level are assumed to have been perfected over the past level and require no training time or teaching. If they save their skill points to spend them later then they'll need to find some teacher or other explanation for developing them in the meanwhile.

The cost for improving a skill is listed below. Every skill level must be purchased in order; to gain level-1 in a skill you need to pay one point for level-0 and then two points for level-1. A PC must be the requisite minimum level to increase a skill to certain levels. Less hardened operators simply don't have the focus and real-life experience to attain such a pitch of mastery.

A PC cannot "partially buy" a skill level. If they don't have enough skill points to buy a new level, they need to save them up until they can. A PC cannot develop skills beyond level-4.

| Skill Level | Skill Point Cost | Minimum Character Level |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 0           | 1                | 1                       |
| 1           | 2                | 1                       |
| 2           | 3                | 3                       |
| 3           | 4                | 6                       |
| 4           | 5                | 9                       |

## PURCHASE IMPROVED ATTRIBUTES

A veteran operator may have trained or honed their natural abilities well enough to improve one of their six base attributes. While even the most determined development isn't enough to turn complete ineptitude into gifted competence, a hard-working agent can hone their existing strengths considerably.

The first time a PC improves an attribute, it costs 1 skill point and adds +1 to an attribute of their choice. The second improvement to their attributes costs 2 skill points, the third 3, and so forth. Each improvement adds +1 to the attribute, potentially improving its modifier. A PC can only ever make five such improvements total; not five per attribute.

PCs must be a certain level before purchasing the third, fourth, or fifth attribute boost. No more than five attribute boosts can ever be purchased by a PC.

| Attribute Boost | Skill Point Cost | Minimum Character Level |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| First           | 1                | 2                       |
| Second          | 2                | 2                       |
| Third           | 3                | 3                       |
| Fourth          | 4                | 6                       |
| Final           | 5                | 9                       |

## CHOOSE NEW FOCI OR EDGE

Finally, the PC might be eligible to pick an additional level in a Focus. At levels 2, 5, 7, and 10 a PC can add a level to an existing Focus or pick up the first level in a new Focus.

If this is the first level they've taken in the Focus, they might be granted a skill as a free bonus pick, depending on the Focus' benefits. During character creation, this bonus skill pick is treated like any other skill pick. If the Focus is taken as part of advancement, however, it instead counts as three skill points spent toward increasing the skill. This is enough to raise a nonexistent skill to level-1, or boost a level-1 skill to level-2. They may do this even if they aren't high-enough level to normally qualify for a skill level that high.

If the skill points aren't quite enough to raise the skill to a new level, they remain as credit toward future advances. If applied to a skill that is already at level-4, the PC can spend the three skill points on any other skill of their choice.

In addition, upon reaching fifth level, an operator can pick a third Edge to add to their existing two. Any benefits this Edge grants are retroactive to first level, such as the bonus skill points from *Educated* or the hit point bonus of *Hard to Kill*.

# CRAFTING AND MODIFYING GEAR

While truly sophisticated research and design often requires resources beyond the reach of a street operator, more modest workshops can allow a talented technician with a healthy supply of after-market parts to improve the quality of their own or their allies' gear. Without a full-fledged R&D department behind them, a PC technician is generally limited to modifying and improving existing gear.

A mod is an adjustment made to a specific piece of tech to make it work better. These mods are finicky, delicate, and often customized to the user. They aren't generally available on the market because they require regular tuning and adjustment by a highly-skilled technician in order to keep them from degrading, or even failing entirely. Mods require costly after-market parts that can be expensive to acquire, and the most sophisticated ones require special limited-release technology or corp-guarded secret components that can only be obtained through unorthodox channels.

These pages describe the rules for building and installing mods. The specific potential mods for weapons and armor are given on page 58, for vehicles on page 87, and for cyberware on page 74.

## INSTALLING MODS

Building and installing a mod requires a well-equipped workshop. It's not necessary to have a full-fledged fabrication plant, but the sort of resources that a professional repair tech or vehicle shop have are necessary to assemble and adjust the tech. In the slums, such a shop can usually be rented for \$500 a day, or bought outright for \$20,000.

Mods have a minimum Fix skill required to install or maintain them; a *Customized* mod requires Fix-1, for example, while a *Flexible* mod takes Fix-2. Without this skill level, the tech can't build or install the mod, and they can't maintain it properly either.

Mods have a cost in dollars or special tech. A tech with access to a normal urban parts market can buy components with a dollar cost, but certain highly sophisticated mods require advanced components that can't be obtained without the right special contacts. A tech will usually have to obtain these components as part of an mission, either in pay or by stealing them, because those who have them need them for their own purposes and will not part with them for ordinary monetary compensation. The specific details of these parts don't matter for mod use, and they're simply tracked as "special tech". If a mod requires three units of special tech, any three units will work, and it's not

normally necessary for a tech to track down specific components.

Mods take time to build and install. It takes one week per minimum skill level of the mod to build and install it in the desired device. Thus, a *Customized* mod takes a week to put in, while a *Flexible* mod takes two. If a tech does nothing other than work, eat, and sleep, they can halve these times, and an additional assistant with at least Fix-0 skill can further halve the time.

Mods must be custom-built to specific objects. A tech cannot build a "generic" mod and then just attach it to a device; it must be carefully designed to fit exactly with that specific item, and sometimes even with a specific user.

## MODS AND MAINTENANCE

Mods require **Maintenance** to keep functioning correctly. Overclocked hardware, bleeding-edge tech, and experimental adjustments just don't have the field durability of more standard gear, so a tech must apply daily attention to the modded hardware if it's not to fail. A normal technician's toolkit is required to maintain mods, but no special parts are needed.

A tech's Maintenance score is equal to the total of their Intelligence and Constitution modifiers plus three times their Fix skill level. The smarter and the longer a tech can work, the more maintenance they can perform, but their overall expertise as a technician is the most crucial element. A tech can maintain a number of mods equal to their Maintenance score without cutting into their mission time or otherwise encumbering their off-duty hours. This maintenance is assumed to take place during downtime and doesn't need to be tracked specifically in play. If they do nothing but maintenance, they can double their score, but this kind of dedication requires sixteen-hour workdays.

If a mod goes without maintenance for 24 hours, it stops working. If a mod goes without maintenance for a week, the entire device it's attached to stops working, as the untuned mod has made it useless or dangerous to use. Weapons can no longer be used in combat, armor no longer gives protection, seizes up, or is too dangerous to wear, and other devices simply stop functioning. A maintenance backlog on a device can be cleared by an hour of work by a technician capable of maintaining it.



## BUILDING CONVENTIONAL GEAR

Sometimes a wrench jockey will want to build their own equipment rather than purchase it off the shelf. This may be because there's no such gear for sale, the equipment is illegal, the tech wants it cheaper than the vendors sell it, or the tech wants to build a custom platform for their favorite mods. The gear built this way must be feasible to create in a workshop; guns, armor, and modestly-sized vehicles are possible, but massive components and other major constructions are not.

A tech requires a workshop to build most equipment. The workshop must be at least nominally capable of working with the kind of gear the tech is building. A vehicle repair shop will not have the tools to brew pharmaceuticals, and a back-room electronics shop won't have the lifts to work on armored vehicles. If the tech needs to refit a workshop to work on a particular type of unsupported gear, they can pay half the shop's original price to get the needed tools.

The tech needs a supply of parts. In any city or sizable community, the tech can scrounge, barter, or buy what they need from the locals. A tech working in a shop out in the wilds can prepare by taking a few footlockers full of materials that can fit in a vehicle or on pack animals, buying a certain number of dollars worth of spare parts and hauling them along. Techs in dire need can strip abandoned buildings, battlefields, and scrap heaps for parts if no better source is available.

Techs must decide whether the device they're building is to be jury-rigged, normal, or mastercrafted. Jury-rigged devices are assembled out of cheap scrap, bottom-tier components, and makeshift kludges. They're much cheaper to make than to buy, but they require constant attention to keep them operating. Normal devices work just as well as anything that you'd buy off the shelf, but the lack of economies of scale and the need to acquire all the parts at retail make them more expensive than buying it through conventional channels. Mastercrafted gear is carefully built to support a tech's own innovations and favorite modifications. They are extremely expensive, but much easier to mod and maintain than off-the-shelf tech.

Building the gear usually takes one month for a vehicle and one week for a weapon, suit of armor, or other portable device. Having at least one assistant with Fix-0 will halve this time.

Jury-rigged devices cost one-quarter as much as the normal device and take half the normal time to build. If the tech has access to scrap or salvage, they can assemble it at no cost, but it takes twice the normal time to build it. A jury-rigged device counts as a mod requiring Fix-0 to maintain. If it goes 24 hours without maintenance, it stops working. Jury-rigged devices cannot be modded.

Normal devices cost twice as much as they would off-the-shelf and take the normal amount of time to build. They cannot be built with scrap or salvaged parts unless the GM decides that the salvage is perfectly suited for this use. Drugs, explosives, and other consumable goods must be built as normal devices rather than jury-rigged or mastercrafted ones.

Mastercrafted devices require costly premade components and cost ten times as much as the normal device, and require twice as much time to build. They are ideal platforms for the tech's own modifications, however, and the first mod installed in the device requires no maintenance.

## FACTORY MODS

Rather than stat out a hundred different variations on pistols and body armor, a GM can reflect the special qualities of certain brands and manufacturers by giving their equipment one or more built-in mods as factory standard qualities. Such elite gear is often difficult to find on the open market, and may require Contacts suitable for black market dealings.

These built-in mods do not require Maintenance, but they are vastly more expensive than they would be if custom-built by a technician. The weapon's cost is increased by five times the normal cost of the mod. For each unit of special technology required, the total price doubles.

The availability of a particular factory mod on the open market is up to the GM. Items with one mod may be relatively accessible for a well-connected buyer, but those with two may be collector's items.

Due to the complex interplay of engineering decisions made in supporting factory improvements, these items are difficult to mod further. If a tech adds any additional mods to the item, any existing factory mods start to require Maintenance as well to keep functioning.



# THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

It's hardly a cyberpunk setting without an extensive selection of hardware for PCs to salivate over. Long lists of guns, broad vistas of high-tech cybernetic implants, choice selections of sleek cyberdecks... much of the genre is about the tools the protagonists use to achieve their ends. This section provides some choices for those tools.

GMs who want to up the tech level of their campaigns can also import the hardware from this game's sci-fi sister game, *Stars Without Number*, perhaps including some low-end TL4 gear. Not everything from that game will fit well into the near-future dystopia that most cyberpunk campaigns occupy, but it can be a useful resource for producing rare prototypes, one-off product runs that never made it to market, or the fruits of secret corp research programs. Obtaining and keeping secret tech like that could be an adventure in of itself.

## ENCUMBRANCE

Most operators travel light. Few of them need to worry about spending months in the back-country wilderness, carrying every mouthful of soymeal and liter of drinkable water on their backs. Only the most dedicated gun bunny is going to ordinarily have more hardware on their person than an ordinary human being can conveniently carry.

Even so, operators also tend to pick up other people's belongings, and there are many situations in which it is critically important to know how many such borrowed items a group can pack out of a facility before the corp cops arrive. This is where the encumbrance rules come in.

### STOWED AND READY ITEMS

A PC can carry up to half of their Strength score in **Ready** items, rounded down. Readied items are those held in the hands, worn suits of armor, pistols in accessible holsters, gear on quick-release harnesses, and other items that are immediately accessible for use. A PC can use a Ready item as part of an action without needing to spend extra time digging it out.

In addition, a PC can carry additional **Stowed** items up to their full Strength score. These items are packed away carefully for optimum portability, and take a Main Action to break out before use.

PCs can haul much heavier objects if necessary. If they push their limits for longer terms, they can carry an additional two Ready and four Stowed items. The first time they do this, their Move speed is cut by 30%,

### ADDING NEW GEAR

GMs who'd like to expand the offered list of gear can use the existing hardware as a guideline. Be careful when introducing new weapons or armor, however; if they're objectively superior to existing options then everyone is going to use them. Making them more expensive will just delay that process slightly.

Some corps will also sell special models of their gear with built-in weapon or armor mods, as explained starting on page 46. These mods don't require a tech's maintenance efforts, but will usually add at least twice their installation cost to the price of the hardware. Access may also be limited to connected PCs or corpsers.

Further modification of these high-end items will throw off the delicate engineering involved, and require the owner to start keeping them up with Maintenance as if they were a normally-installed mod.

| Size of Item                            | Enc |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Portable in a small pocket              | 0*  |
| Portable in one hand                    | 1   |
| Requires two hands to carry or use it   | 2   |
| Requires a whole-body effort to haul it | 5+  |
| Dragging an unconscious team mate       | 12  |

\*: Any reasonable amount of these can be carried

from 10m to 7m. The second time, it's cut by 50%, from 10m to 5m. More weight than this can't be practically hauled over significant distances.

Small, regularly-shaped objects such as grenades, pharmaceuticals, rations, and firearm magazines can be wrapped into bundles for easier portability. Three such items can be tied into a bundle that only counts as one item of encumbrance. Breaking into this bundle takes an extra Main Action, however.

### GAMES WITHOUT ENCUMBRANCE

Encumbrance limits matter a lot when a team is a week away from civilization and has to rely entirely on their own resources to win through or perish. It matters less when there's a convenience store on every block, and some tables prefer not to use these rules.

If the GM so elects, then PCs can carry whatever amount of gear the GM thinks is reasonable. In such cases the GM should check over character sheets before each mission to make sure reason is not outraged.

# ACQUIRING GEAR

In most cyberpunk settings, it's a given that PCs will want to lay their hands on a lot of objects that the corporations would prefer they not have. The accessibility of a given sort of equipment will depend on the particulars of the campaign setting, but a few general guidelines can be applied.

**Small arms and melee weapons** might be illegal, but they're so ubiquitous that city cops aren't going to bust you for them unless they've already decided to take you in. Many jurisdictions will have given up any attempt at controlling sub-military small arms and just slapped a transfer tax on their sale to capture some extra income from the corps.

**Grenades, explosives, and automatic weaponry** are usually taken more seriously, if only because the corps and government want to maintain a monopoly on high-end tools of violence. Flashbangs and non-lethal gas grenades might be acceptable for civilian use, but getting hands on more than that is going to require a competent gunsmith, capable basement chemist, or ties with a black market seller. **Heavy weapons** usually require connections with an actual arms dealer, as most of them are too complex or metallurgically demanding to be built in a slum fab shop.

**Armor** is usually unregulated, though the best personal armor is usually only sold to licensed entities. In some parts of a cyberpunk city it can be commonplace to walk downtown in a visibly armored outfit, while in corper enclaves a more subdued appearance is expected. Wearing heavy armor in public declares that you expect something unpleasant to happen, and the local security are going to take an interest in that.

**Portable drones and civilian vehicles** are usually available to the public in unarmed variants, though it's a trivial matter for a tech to wire up guns to existing hardpoints. **Large drones and military vehicles** are usually only sold to corps or government offices, with a few exceptions for agricultural or construction use.

**Pharmaceuticals** are trivially simple for most operators to acquire, though high-end corp combat drugs may require a personal connection. **Cyberdecks and technical gear** are sometimes illegal for non-registered buyers, but any PC with the skills to make use of such tools almost certainly knows where to get them.

## PURCHASING OUTLETS

When it comes time to actually buy gear, a GM may want a clearer idea about the kind of retail outlets a PC might have available.

**Gear bought during character creation** can be acquired for list price with no special effort, if the GM decides it's available.

**Gear bought with a Focus**, such as the vehicle credit given to an *Ace Driver*, can be acquired without extra work if it's otherwise commercially available.



**Corp retail outlets** can be found throughout most cities, though they're most common in the affluent districts. Fully legitimate corp goods are sold through these storefronts and licensed retailers, though usually for a 20% premium over list price to reflect the additional fees and taxes involved in the purchase. Nothing illegal will be offered, however.

**Small shops and slum vendors** offer their goods cheaper, at standard list prices, in exchange for considerably greater uncertainty about their provenance. PCs are assumed to be streetwise enough to dodge the obvious knockoffs, or at least pick the imitations that are as good as the real thing. Many slum district vendors will have a selection of modestly illegal goods beneath the counter, such as a few pistols, a hardly-used rifle, or possibly a grenade or two. Street drugs may also be on tap if they're paid up with the local gang.

**Black marketeers** are the professionals in contraband, and can regularly get their clients automatic weapons, explosives, restricted armor, and other significantly illicit goods, though they often specialize in only one type of trade. While they usually sell at the prices given in this section, getting an introduction to one often requires at least one Contact or mission as a favor to prove a team's usefulness and trustworthiness.

**Arms dealers** can get PCs anything they can imagine. It takes motivation to persuade a miltech company to deal with operators, however, and multiple missions are often required. At this level, a Contact might get a PC a chance to do a mission for such an exalted figure rather than giving immediate access.



## GEAR, LIFESTYLES, AND SERVICES

These are simply some of the more common items of equipment often purchased by operators. Prices can vary considerably depending on sources, but the listed costs are usual for the kind of vendors that operators frequent.

Worn equipment that is being used, such as IR goggles or a gas mask, must be Readied to be employed.

**Active Hearing Protection:** This headset protects the wearer from disorientation due to loud noises. It passes along conversational-level speech without difficulty.

**Ammunition:** Individual rounds are loaded into empty magazines that are specific to individual firearms.

**Backpack:** Backpacks, gear harnesses, and other such kit may add some bulk to an operator's burden, but without them the GM is perfectly justified in asking how a PC is fitting their entire loadout in their jacket pockets.

**Binoculars:** Most modern binocs have low-light functionality and magnification sufficient to bring targets as much as a kilometer distant into view.

**Bus pass, monthly:** A critical mobility resource for the first mission of many operators.

**Climbing kit:** Ultralight cord, a grapnel, some grip handholds, and a fast-acting, ultra-strong wall adhesive make up this kit.

**Clothing:** Clothing has no Encumbrance when worn, but it's sometimes prudent to have a spare outfit in your pack.

**Gas mask:** Bulky and uncomfortable, but once Readied it leaves the user immune to most inhaled gases, including tear gas grenades.

**Goggles:** Basic anti-flash goggles defuse the visual threat of flashbangs and similar dazzlers. IR goggles include anti-flash tech, but also give the user effective IR vision out to 50 meters in most environments.

**Kit:** These bundles of gear are carefully packed for minimal weight. Toolkits give a tech the gear they need for basic repairs and construction, while medical kits provide first aid implements. Cyberdoc kits contain everything medical kits do, as well as gear for cyber maintenance or even emergency implantation. Survival kits are for badlands operations, with water filtration, fire-making tools, and other such gear for extended wilderness stays.

**Lockpicks:** Both manual lockpicks and a selection of useful electronic shims sufficient to threaten most modern locks.

**Military rations:** This food brick is unappetizing but contains the nutrition necessary for a day of heavy activity. Water can be included for an extra point of Encumbrance per day.

| Common Operator Gear          | Cost  | Enc |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Active hearing protection     | \$250 | 1   |
| Ammunition, empty magazine    | \$10  | 1   |
| Ammunition, per round         | \$1   | *   |
| Backpack or gear harness      | \$25  | 1~  |
| Binoculars                    | \$100 | 1   |
| Bus pass, monthly             | \$50  | *   |
| Climbing kit                  | \$150 | 2   |
| Clothing, fashionable         | \$500 | 1~  |
| Clothing, haute couture       | \$10K | 1~  |
| Clothing, ordinary            | \$25  | 1~  |
| Gas mask                      | \$1K  | 1   |
| Goggles, Anti-Flash           | \$100 | 1   |
| Goggles, IR                   | \$1K  | 1   |
| Kit, Basic Tools              | \$100 | 2   |
| Kit, Cyberdoc                 | \$500 | 2   |
| Kit, Medkit                   | \$100 | 1   |
| Kit, Survival                 | \$100 | 2   |
| Lockpicks                     | \$100 | 1   |
| Military ration, per day      | \$20  | 1   |
| Portable video camera         | \$300 | 1   |
| Radio, handheld               | \$50  | 1   |
| Radio, ultralight tab         | \$500 | 0   |
| Smartphone service plan/month | \$10  | -   |
| Smartphone, basic             | \$50  | *   |
| Smartphone, fashionable       | \$2K  | *   |
| VR crown, cheap               | \$50  | 1   |
| Wearable light                | \$25  | 1~  |

~: These items have no Encumbrance while worn.

\*: No Encumbrance for any reasonable amount

**Portable video camera:** Palm-sized and discreet, this camera can record up to twelve hours of high-def video before its internal memory is filled.

**Radio:** Both conventional handheld radios and ultra-convenient headset or collar-tab radios can be had. Ranges are one kilometer in the city and six in an open, flat area.

**Smartphone:** Corp-approved media devices are cheap and ubiquitous, but few operators trust them with sensitive information.

**VR Crown:** A cheap headset for a VR addict or a hacker too poor for a cranial jack.

**Wearable Light:** These clip-on lights can illuminate up to 30 meters ahead of the wearer.

## LIFESTYLE COSTS

Living costs money. Every operator needs to make room in their budget for rent, soyburgers, and gang protection payments, and failing to find the money for these things will add a load of stress to the PC.

The adjacent table describes common lifestyle costs and the maximum System Strain modifiers that apply while a PC is living such a life. These modifiers come into effect as soon as a PC starts paying – or not paying – for a given lifestyle level.

Operator teams who obtain their own property or headquarters and make their own deals for local support may be able to lower or eliminate these lifestyle costs at the GM's discretion.

| Lifestyle, per Month                                                   | Cost  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Squatter life in an abandoned building<br>-2 maximum System Strain     | \$0   |
| Slum living in a dirty shared apartment<br>-1 maximum System Strain    | \$300 |
| Middle-class corper life in a nice rental<br>No System Strain modifier | \$1K  |
| Fine living in a clean, secure building<br>+1 maximum System Strain    | \$5K  |
| Luxury life with all its little pleasures<br>+2 maximum System Strain  | \$20K |

## COMMON WAGES

Most operators work amid the sordid poverty of a city's underbelly. Lives are cheap and labor is cheaper there, with most of its denizens struggling constantly just to keep food in their belly, a roof over their head, and the gang collectors away from their kneecaps.

Sometimes the PCs need to hire some extra help, however, or the GM needs to know what a reasonable wage would be for some NPC. The adjacent table gives the average daily earnings for various types of workers and elites.

Hirelings will carry out their duties with reasonable levels of loyalty, but most won't risk their lives or face opposition that threatens their destruction. Bodyguards will act to defend their employers, but only the best will stick around in the face of overwhelming opposition. Ordinary street thugs and hired gangers will be willing to commit acts of extreme violence against enemy gangs or helpless civilians, but few of them have any interest in fair fights under other circumstances.

| Worker                            | Earnings / Day |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Unskilled street laborer          | \$10           |
| Low-level ganger or street thug   | \$15           |
| Common streetwalker               | \$20           |
| Petty street stall merchant       | \$25           |
| Capable street tech or cyberdoc   | \$50           |
| Competent street bodyguard        | \$50           |
| Entry-level corp worker           | \$30           |
| Low-level corp lifer              | \$40           |
| Street cop or skilled corp worker | \$100          |
| Professional companion            | \$200          |
| Corp-employed hacker              | \$200          |
| Corp middle manager               | \$250          |
| Corp-sponsored cyberdoc           | \$250          |
| Elite or well-known bodyguard     | \$500          |
| Successful gang boss              | \$750          |
| Corp branch office manager        | \$1,000        |
| High-ranking corp exec            | \$5,000        |
| Oligarchic elite of a city        | \$10,000       |

## COMMON BRIBE COSTS

Bribery is a commonplace in any organization of consequence, and it's widely accepted that anyone with authority will use it to make a certain amount of side profit. While technically forbidden, everyone expects that cash will obtain faster service, forgiveness for minor offenses, or access to restricted areas.

Serious bribery is for favors beyond that line. Favors that could cause problems for a superior, cost the official their job, or buy them trouble with someone else are going to cost far more, if they'll do it at all.

The bribe costs on the adjacent table are expressed in multiples of the target's daily wage, as it costs more to bribe a manager than a janitor. Particular like or dislike for the PCs can move the price accordingly.

| Usual Bribe Costs                           | Cost  |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| Look the other way at a minor infraction    | x2    |
| Pass out information they shouldn't         | x2    |
| Do a small favor within their authority     | x5    |
| Turn a blind eye when it might make trouble | x14*  |
| Turn a blind eye when it will make trouble  | x60*  |
| Do a favor that could have minor backlash   | x30*  |
| Do a favor that might get them punished     | x90*  |
| Do a favor that might get them fired        | x180* |

\* This is a serious risk, and many NPCs will need reasons beyond simple cash to agree to it

# ARMOR

On the street, there's no sharp line that distinguishes "practical urban fashion" from "anti-ballistic armor". Reinforced fiber weaves, soft ablative plates, and non-spalling backing sheets are as common in street fashion as the latest seasonal color palette.

The opposite table lists some of the most common types of armor and reinforced clothing that the PCs are likely to encounter in their adventures. Each item is listed with certain important qualities.

## ARMOR CLASS

Armor Class measures the difficulty of landing a meaningful hit on a target. The higher the Armor Class, the harder it is to do significant injury to the wearer.

Most armor provides two different Armor Classes: ranged and melee. Most are more effective at deflecting or absorbing the impact of small ballistic projectiles than they are at negating the impact of large, high-tech melee weaponry, but some outfits focus more on resisting massive physical trauma.

A normal, unarmored person has a base Armor Class of 10 against both ranged and melee attacks. A PC's Dexterity modifier is always applied to both ACs, so a PC with a Dex modifier of +1 in a medium armored suit has a ranged AC of 19 and a melee AC of 15.

## DAMAGE SOAK

Armor is built to absorb the minor impacts, small cuts, and lesser bruises that would otherwise distract the wearer. Damage Soak measures the armor's ability to buffer these injuries before they start to matter.

Damage Soak is treated as additional temporary hit points for the wearer. Hit point damage they suffer is subtracted from this Damage Soak first before depleting the wearer's hit points. Damage Soak cannot absorb injuries that armor could not reasonably protect against, such as falling damage or toxic gases. Damage Soak regenerates at the start of every new scene as the wearer's luck gets another chance.

## ENCUMBRANCE

Some armor is so light and flexible that it has no effective Encumbrance cost when it's being worn. Other outfits are bulky enough to be burdensome.

Armor must be worn as a Readied item in order to confer its benefits. A PC without enough Strength to Ready a suit of armor cannot wear it. Only one type of armor can be worn at a time, plus armor accessories.

## TRAUMA TARGET MOD

Weapons that roll equal or higher than a target's Trauma Target will inflict a Traumatic Hit. Usually, that number is 6, but some armor is tough or all-encompassing enough to raise that threshold. This mod is added to the wearer's Trauma Target.

## SUBTLETY

Some armor is discreet, unnoticeable to all but a pat-down. Other harness is so obvious that there's no reasonable way to conceal it.

Subtle armor can be worn in most social situations without drawing comment; it's either discreet enough or commonplace enough that only the most formal occasions will forbid it. Obvious armor is the sort of thing that nobody would wear unless they expected imminent trouble, and its wearers will likely be treated accordingly.

## COST

Protection doesn't come for free. Good armor costs money, and that's assuming a dealer can be found for some of the higher-end or more esoteric items. The prices here assume that the PC can find a legitimate seller of a given piece of armor.

Obsolete or old armor can be found for half price. Such pieces have 1d2 worse ranged and melee AC and 1d4 fewer points of Damage Soak, to a minimum of 0. These dice are rolled *after* the PC has bought the armor.

## STACKING ARMOR

Only one set of armor can be worn at a time, plus whatever accessories are attached to it. Armor and intrinsic AC do not stack, so someone with **Dermal Armor** implants who decides to wear conventional armor will use either the cyber stats or the armor stats, not both.

## TYPES OF ARMOR

Most armor is divided into civilian items, commonly available on the open market, and integrated suit armor manufactured by the corps for security guards, law enforcement, and internal enforcers. The latter can be difficult to get if you don't have the right connections, and tends to draw heavy street attention.

**Armored Clothing:** The bulky plates and heavy ballistic weaves of this outfit are disguised as drapes and fashion elements.

**Heavy Armored Suit:** A head-to-toe suit of interlocking plates and impact absorption units, these suits are reserved for high-end response teams and military operations.

**Impact Jacket:** Built to absorb the impact of various contact sports, extreme athletic pursuits, and unguided vehicle races, these jackets usually come as part of a full-body protective outfit.

**Light Armored Suit:** Ordinary law enforcement and security guards will be wearing suits like this, usually brightly emblazoned with their corporate affiliation.



| Civilian Armor           | Ranged AC | Melee AC | Damage Soak | Enc. | Trauma Target Mod | Subtle? | Cost      | Note  |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|------|-------------------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Ordinary Clothing        | 10        | 10       | 0           | 0    | 0                 | Subtle  | \$25      |       |
| Reinforced Clothing      | 13        | 10       | 2           | 0    | 0                 | Subtle  | \$100     |       |
| War Harness              | 13        | 14       | 5           | 1    | 0                 | Obvious | \$200     |       |
| Street Leathers          | 13        | 12       | 3           | 0    | 0                 | Subtle  | \$250     |       |
| Reinforced Longcoat      | 15        | 13       | 5           | 1    | +1                | Subtle  | \$500     |       |
| Armored Clothing         | 16        | 14       | 5           | 2    | +1                | Subtle  | \$1,000   |       |
| Plated Longcoat          | 17        | 15       | 5           | 3    | +1                | Obvious | \$2,000   | H     |
| Impact Jacket            | 12        | 14       | 8           | 1    | +1                | Obvious | \$1,000   |       |
| <b>Suit Armor</b>        |           |          |             |      |                   |         |           |       |
| Light Armored Suit       | 16        | 13       | 5           | 2    | +2                | Obvious | \$5,000@  |       |
| Medium Armored Suit      | 18        | 14       | 10          | 3    | +2                | Obvious | \$10,000@ |       |
| Heavy Armored Suit       | 20        | 18       | 15          | 3    | +3                | Obvious | \$20,000@ | H     |
| <b>Armor Accessories</b> |           |          |             |      |                   |         |           |       |
| Riot Shield              | +2        | +4       | 0           | 2    | 0                 | Obvious | \$1,000   |       |
| Absorption Plates        | +2        | +2       | 3           | 1    | 0                 | Obvious | \$500     | H, NS |
| Joint Reinforcement      | +1        | +1       | 0           | 0    | 0                 | Subtle  | \$250     | H, NS |
| Obsolete Tech            | -1d2      | -1d2     | -1d4        | 0    | 0                 | -       | x50%      |       |

@: This armor requires a relevant Contact to purchase, or some other special opportunity

H: The armor or accessory applies a -1 penalty to all Sneak or Exert skill checks. Multiple heavy items stack.

NS: This accessory cannot be added to suit armor.

**Medium Armored Suit:** Heavy security usually sports armor on this level, including police rapid response teams.

**Ordinary Clothing:** Some bold, impoverished, or highly fashionable people still insist on wearing clothing that has no functional use as armor.

**Plated Longcoat:** An ankle-length coat, robe, or mantle is used as a substrate for numerous reinforced plates and swaths of ballistic weave. It's heavy, bulky, and blatant, but it can absorb a lot of punishment.

**Reinforced Clothing:** Subtle polymer sheets and reinforced weaves are used to provide a modicum of protection in this clothing without sacrificing taste.

**Reinforced Longcoat:** Long, draping clothing is bolstered with advanced fabrics and discretely-placed absorption plates, the whole remaining deniable as armor.

**Street Leathers:** Fashionable, aggressive, and often mismatched, "street leathers" seldom have any non-synthetic leather in their makeup, but are light and comfortable enough to wear as a habit.

**War Harness:** An upgraded form of street leathers, these outfits have sacrificed all discretion for whatever spare ballistic plates and advanced polymer weaves its owner can sew or bolt on. It's usually the best armor that local gangs or common thugs can afford.

## ARMOR ACCESSORIES

Many buyers feel the need to layer on a little extra protection. While it's not possible to wear more than one set of armor at a time, armor accessories can improve the odds for most outfits. Armor accessories usually add a bonus to the wearer's base ranged or melee ACs. A given accessory can only be added once.

**Riot Shield:** These bulky, transparent shields are most effective in fending off melee attackers. They must be Readied in one hand; users with multiple cyberarms can benefit from only one shield at a time. A shield negates the first melee Shock damage a bearer takes in a round.

**Absorption Plates:** Additional impact-absorbing buffer plates are added to the armor. Their bulk inflicts a -1 penalty to the user's Sneak and Exert checks.

**Joint Reinforcement:** The weak points around limb joints are reinforced with extra layers of weave. The extra weave hinders movement, and applies a -1 penalty to the wearer's Sneak and Exert checks.

**Obsolete Tech:** Bargains can be had for last year's fashions, whether in armor or accessories. Such outfits cost only half as much as usual, but suffer a 1d2 penalty to both their ranged and Melee ACs, down to a minimum of AC 10. They also absorb 1d4 fewer Damage Soak, to a minimum of 0. These dice are only rolled after the obsolete armor has been purchased.

# WEAPONS

In corporate facilities and residential enclaves, weapons are tightly controlled by corp security. Anything more dangerous than a pocketknife must be smuggled in past paid-off security staffers or manufactured within the enclave. A certain amount of violence is inevitable when sorting out C-suite disagreements over corporate direction, but most of the corpers who live in such places never touch a weapon.

Things are very different on the street. To go unarmed in public is either a statement of supreme confidence in your hired muscle or an act of pure recklessness. With most municipal law enforcement disinterested in anything short of double-digit body counts, the only security an ordinary citizen has lies in personal arms and gang protection payments.

## ACQUIRING WEAPONS

The weapons listed here are among the most common available to an operator. Many of the pistols, semi-auto rifles, monomolecular knives, and other pieces of hardware are illegal to sell or possess, but even a minimally-experienced operator almost certainly knows where to buy them without any troublesome questions.

A few pieces of gear are rare enough and in high-enough demand in the underworld to make them more difficult to acquire. Weapons marked this way need to be bought through an applicable Contact, usually at the price listed. Teams with a capable technician might choose to fabricate their own tools with the crafting rules on page 46. Such homebrew guns might lack some of the polish and reliability of corp-produced hardware, but their availability adds to their charm.

## WEAPON STATISTICS

**Dmg** is the die it rolls for hit point damage on a successful hit. This damage is always increased by the weapon's relevant attribute modifier, and it may be further boosted by certain Foci or mods.

**Range** is expressed in meters for guns and thrown weapons, with a normal range and an extreme range. Attacks beyond normal range take a -2 hit penalty.

**Cost** is the average street cost for the weapon.

**Shock** applies only to melee weapons, as explained on page 36. If the target's AC is equal or less than the weapon's Shock rating, the target takes the listed Shock damage even if the attack misses. Shock damage is modified by the weapon's attribute modifier and any damage bonuses that explicitly add to Shock.

**Mag** is the number of rounds in a loaded firearm. Each attack costs one round, while using a weapon in burst fire mode costs three. Reloading a weapon is usually a Main Action.

**Attr** is the attribute that modifies the weapon's hit and damage roll. If two attributes are listed, you can use whichever one has the better modifier.

**Encumbrance** is the number of items of encumbrance the weapon takes up. Weapons must be Readied to use them; if not, the attacker must spend a Main Action getting them ready for employment.

**Trauma Die** is the die rolled when a lethal weapon hits. If it's equal or higher than the target's Trauma Target, which is usually 6, the victim takes a Traumatic Hit as explained on page 37. Non-lethal weapons and attacks do not roll the Trauma Die.



## FIREARMS

Guns of these descriptions are made by a host of different corporations, street gunsmiths, and casual enthusiasts. While many operators spend hours arguing over minute brand differences, all of these general weapon types have roughly the same functionality.

**Light** and **heavy pistols** are categorized by the caliber of the bullet they fire. Some operators prefer the low recoil and high mag capacity possible with a low-caliber round, while others like to have a little more certainty in dropping the targets they hit.

**Advanced bows** are used by a few specialists who prefer the near-silence that modern composites provide or the massive blood loss induced by a modern fractal broadhead carried on a fifty-gram arrow.

**Rifles** and **combat rifles** are similar semi-automatic tech, though the latter is equipped with a burst-fire selector and usually trades the range of a heavier caliber for the ability to carry more ammunition.

**Submachine guns** are popular for their small form factor and convenient burst fire, though like other burst-fire weaponry the corps frown heavily on civilian possession.

**Shotguns** of various stripes can be found under the counter of practically every bar and shop in a slum. Simple double-barrel models can be made by any home gunsmith with a pulse, but the finer tolerances and more elaborate machining of a burst-fire capable combat shotgun leaves them as a more selective product. Ranges and damages given are for shot shells; slugs double their normal and extreme ranges but apply a -1 penalty to hit rolls.

**Sniper rifles** are often nothing more than bolt-action rifles with expensive tuning and optics. If not fired from a rest in a prepared position, a sniper rifle's statistics are the same as a normal rifle.

**Taser pistols** cover a family of ranged non-lethal weapons small and light enough to carry concealed. Most rely on tried-and-true electrical shocks to drop a target; they inflict non-lethal hit point damage and cannot make Traumatic Hits.

**Automatic rifles** include a large range of barely man-portable firearms designed to hurl vast amounts of lead through the air, and unlike smaller firearms, they can use suppressive fire if properly braced. Ammunition for these guns comes in belts or boxes. The mag rating reflects how many rounds the weapon can fire before needing a refill, with each "round" costing \$50 worth of ammunition. The compactness of their loaded magazines still only counts as one item, however.

## FIRING TO SUPPRESS

If a weapon can fire to suppress, the wielder may do so as a Main Action. Each round of suppressive fire costs twice the usual ammo.

The attacker picks a 90-degree cone and fills it with lead. Any targets within the weapon's normal range who are not behind hard cover must make an Evasion save or take half the weapon's damage, rounded up. The attacker rolls the weapon's Trauma Die individually against each victim struck, and may inflict Traumatic Hits with this damage.

| Firearm           | Dmg    | Range       | Cost      | Mag | Attr. | Enc | Trauma Die | Trauma Rating |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Light Pistol      | 1d6    | 10/80       | \$200     | 15  | Dex   | 1   | 1d8        | x2            |
| Heavy Pistol      | 1d8    | 10/100      | \$200     | 8   | Dex   | 1   | 1d6        | x3            |
| Advanced Bow      | 1d8    | 30/200      | \$500     | 1§  | Dex   | 2   | 1d8+1      | x3            |
| Rifle             | 1d10+2 | 200/400     | \$1,000   | 6   | Dex   | 2   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Combat Rifle      | 1d12*  | 100/300     | \$2,500@  | 30  | Dex   | 2   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Submachine Gun    | 1d8*   | 30/100      | \$2,000@  | 20  | Dex   | 1   | 1d6        | x2            |
| Shotgun           | 3d4    | 10/30       | \$200     | 2   | Dex   | 2   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Semi-Auto Shotgun | 3d4    | 10/30       | \$1,000   | 6   | Dex   | 2   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Combat Shotgun    | 3d4*   | 10/30       | \$3,000@  | 12  | Dex   | 2   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Sniper Rifle¶     | 2d8    | 1,000/2,000 | \$3,000   | 1§  | Dex   | 2   | 1d10       | x4            |
| Taser Pistol      | 1d8    | 10/15       | \$500     | 2   | Dex   | 1   | -          | -             |
| Automatic Rifle   | 2d8#   | 200/400     | \$10,000@ | 10  | Dex   | 4   | 1d10       | x3            |

\*: This weapon may use burst fire when attacking, firing three rounds to gain +2 to hit and damage rolls.

§: This weapon can be reloaded with a Move action, or an On Turn if the user has at least Shoot-1 skill

¶: If not fired from a stationary rest, this weapon's statistics are the same as a regular rifle

@: This weapon requires an applicable Contact to buy, being generally illegal for open sale

#: This weapon can fire to suppress if braced against a solid support or the gunner is prone



| Melee and Thrown Weapons | Dmg     | Range | Cost    | Shock   | Attr.   | Enc | Trauma Die | Trauma Rating |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Unarmed Attack           | 1d2^    | -     | -       | -       | Str/Dex | -   | 1d6        | x1            |
| Knife                    | 1d4     | 10/20 | \$20    | 1/AC 15 | Str/Dex | 1   | 1d6        | x3            |
| Club                     | 1d4^    | 10/20 | N/A     | 1/AC 18 | Str     | 1   | 1d6        | x2            |
| Spear                    | 1d6     | 10/20 | \$50    | 2/AC 13 | Str/Dex | 1   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Sword                    | 1d8     | -     | \$200   | 2/AC 13 | Str/Dex | 1   | 1d8        | x2            |
| Big Sword                | 2d6     | -     | \$500   | 2/AC 15 | Str     | 2*  | 1d8        | x3            |
| Big Club                 | 1d10^   | -     | \$100   | 2/AC 18 | Str     | 2*  | 1d8        | x3            |
| Advanced Knife           | 1d6     | 10/20 | \$200   | 2/AC 15 | Str/Dex | 1   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Advanced Sword           | 1d10    | -     | \$1,000 | 3/AC 15 | Str/Dex | 1   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Advanced Big Sword       | 2d8     | -     | \$2,500 | 4/AC 15 | Str     | 2*  | 1d8        | x3            |
| Advanced Club            | 1d8^    | -     | \$500   | 2/AC 18 | Str     | 1   | 1d8        | x3            |
| Grenade, Flash           | Special | 10/30 | \$50    | None    | Dex     | 1   | -          | -             |
| Grenade, Frag            | 2d6     | 10/30 | \$100@  | None    | Dex     | 1   | 1d8        | x2            |
| Grenade, Gas             | 1d10^   | 10/30 | \$50    | None    | Dex     | 1   | -          | -             |
| Grenade, Smoke           | -       | 10/30 | \$25    | None    | Dex     | 1   | -          | -             |

^: This weapon's damage is always non-lethal, unless desired otherwise. Non-lethal hits don't roll the Trauma Die.

\*: This is a two-handed weapon, making it impossible to have a Readied item in the user's off-hand

@: This weapon requires an applicable Contact to buy, being generally illegal for open sale

## MELEE AND THROWN WEAPONS

While firearms are the weapons of choice for most operators, a well-equipped agent will often have additional options to hand.

**Knives, clubs, swords, and other simple melee weapons** are available almost anywhere on the street. Particularly impoverished gangsters sometimes fashion makeshift machetes and improvised shivs when better can't be obtained. Such weapons are effectively free, but have a -1 penalty to hit and damage rolls due to their ungainly make.

**Advanced weapons** employ modern polymers, sophisticated metallurgy, fractal edges, electro-stun tech, and a small legion of marketers to sell products that are distinctly superior to the plain steel edges of a prior age. An advanced micro-edged butcher knife can go through bone like bamboo and keep an edge for weeks between sharpenings. The more martial offerings go to even greater lengths in their marketing, with some enterprising serial killers and gang enforcers inking exclusivity deals with particular knife manufacturers.

Due to the sheer ubiquity and availability of melee weapons, they're often treated with less suspicion than firearms. A corp cop might bring somebody in for an "illegal knife", but only if he already wanted them for a different and better reason. Nightclubs and bars might expect firearms to go in the locker at the entrance, but they're often disinclined to go combing their patrons for every suspiciously-sharp hair ornament or multi-purpose fashion accessory they might carry.

## GRENADES

Grenades are simple enough to be manufactured by any sufficiently-daring technician, but their use tends to draw significant heat. Pitching frag grenades and using high explosives is a very good way to draw a drastic response, but even so, sometimes it's worth it for a sufficiently determined operator.

Grenades may be thrown at a point within range and always target AC 10. On a miss, the grenade bounces 1d10 meters in a random direction before exploding. Grenades have a 5-meter radius of effect.

**Flash grenades** force victims without eye and ear protection to make a Physical save; on a failure, the victim loses their next Main Action and takes a -2 penalty to hit rolls and AC for the next 1d6 rounds. Flashbang effects don't stack, and a target who makes their save cannot be flashbanged again that same round.

**Frag grenades** inflict 2d6 damage on all victims in range, plus the chance for a Traumatic Hit. An Evasion save can halve a frag grenade's damage, and each point of melee AC the target has above 14 reduces the final damage total by one point, possibly down to zero.

**Gas grenades** create a 10-meter-diameter cloud of opaque, choking, irritating gas that disperses in one round. They inflict non-lethal damage, halved on a successful Physical save, and are useless against targets with breathing protection. They provide full concealment for those within the gas. **Smoke grenades** are harmless, but provide the same 10-meter dome of concealment where it's necessary. Gas and smoke aren't enough to defeat IR or augmented visuals.

| Heavy Weapon           | Dmg     | Range   | Cost     | Mag | Attr. | Enc | Trauma Die | Trauma Rating |
|------------------------|---------|---------|----------|-----|-------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Anti-Materiel Rifle ¶  | 3d8!    | 1K/2K   | \$8,000@ | 5   | Dex   | 3   | 1d12       | x3            |
| Grenade Launcher       | Grenade | 150/350 | \$3,000@ | 3   | Dex   | 1   | -          | -             |
| Demo Charge            | 3d10!   | 20/20   | \$1,000@ | -   | -     | 1   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Heavy Machine Gun ¶    | 3d6#!   | 500/2K  | \$10K@   | 10  | Dex   | 3   | 1d12       | x3            |
| Mortar                 | 3d6     | 1K/2K   | \$5,000@ | 1   | Wis   | 3   | 1d12       | x3            |
| Rocket Launcher        | 3d10!   | 2K/4K   | \$5,000@ | -   | Dex   | 2   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Land Mine, Anti-Pers.  | 1d8     | -       | \$150@   | -   | -     | 1   | 1d10       | x3            |
| Land Mine, Anti-Vehic. | 3d8!    | -       | \$1,000@ | -   | -     | 2   | 1d20       | x3            |

@: This weapon requires an applicable Contact to buy, being generally illegal for open sale

¶: If not fired from a stationary rest, this weapon's statistics are the same as a regular rifle

#: This weapon can fire to suppress if fixed to a vehicle or stationary firing position

!: This weapon's Trauma Die can inflict Traumatic Hits on drones, vehicles, and other machines.

## HEAVY WEAPONS

While uncommon, some operators may be unfortunate enough to run into military opposition or antagonists who have no concerns about drawing intolerable heat from the local authorities. These combatants are likely to pack weaponry much heavier than a normal street operative would sport.

**Anti-materiel rifles** have encountered something of a renaissance with the ubiquity of armored drones and heavily cybered combatants. While not suitable for downing tanks or other heavily armored vehicles, their 20mm rounds are more than sufficient to punch through lighter armor plating, concrete walls, and full body conversion cyborgs. Use of a secure firing rest is recommended for best results.

**Grenade launchers** are accessories that are mounted on rifle-sized firearms, adding 1 Encumbrance to their bulk. These weapons can launch specially-designed grenades to the listed range, targeting them as if they were thrown normally. These special grenades cost and function the same as their regular equivalents but cannot be thrown by hand. When attacking, the user can choose whether to fire the grenade launcher or the weapon it's mounted to, but both cannot be fired in the same round.

Stand-alone grenade launcher models are available for vehicle or drone mounting, counting as 2 Encumbrance but otherwise having the same cost and statistics.

**Demo charges** are shaped explosive charges usually meant to knock human-sized holes in anything short of fortified defensive walls. While ineffective as thrown weapons, when used as part of a trap or ambush they inflict their listed damage in a cone out to normal range, with an Evasion save for half damage. If applied carefully to a vehicle target, the following explosion will inevitably destroy it. Like frag grenades, use of demo charges tends to be very exciting to security forces and can provoke more heat than many operators like to draw.

**Heavy machine guns** are old tech, but reliable. Without a fixed firing position or vehicle mount, however, their recoil makes them almost uncontrollable. Due to the mass of lead involved in firing an HMG, each "round" of its ammunition costs \$100 and counts as a full item of encumbrance.

**Mortars** are rare, but have their uses amid the tall buildings of an urban sprawl. They have a minimum range of 20 meters, but can lob indirect fire over buildings and obstacles. Mortars always target AC 20 at first, but each round of fire at the same target grants a +1 hit bonus if there's a forward spotter to adjust the aim. Mortar rounds act as frag grenades on the target point, but do 3d6 damage at base with a 10-meter radius. Armor doesn't lessen harm from mortar rounds.

Relatively simple as they are, a mortar round costs \$50 and counts as one item of encumbrance.

**Rocket launchers** include a wide variety of single-shot disposable launchers. Their general imprecision forces a -4 hit penalty against human-sized targets, but they inflict frag grenade damage on any target within 5 meters of the rocket's landing point. Specialized anti-armor warheads lose this frag grenade bonus, but do double damage to vehicles or obstacles. Operators who intend to take down enemy vehicles favor them for their effectiveness in that role.

**Land mines** come in anti-personnel and anti-vehicle flavors. The first activates on any human-sized approach within 1 meter, inflicting damage in a 2-meter radius with an Evasion save for half. Anti-vehicle mines can only be activated by vehicular levels of ground pressure or vehicle-sized proximate metal masses, but do their damage in a 5-meter radius. Humans get an Evasion save for half damage in either case.

## ARMOR AND WEAPON MODS

Few things are so often modified as an operator's favorite sidearm or personal armor. Almost every veteran of the street has a few tweaks and refinements on their gear, and their effects can sometimes make the difference between a success and gory failure.

The mods listed here can be applied to gear by a competent technician at the listed costs, as explained on page 46. Some require a certain number of units of special technology as well as ordinary parts.

### ARMOR MODS

The mods listed below can be applied to any type of armor, but cannot be applied to armor accessories. Unless listed otherwise, a mod can only be applied once to any given piece of gear.

**Absorption Pads:** Kinetic padding is added to the armor, granting it 5 more hit points of damage soak per fight.

**Active Response:** The armor has hyper-advanced reactive defenses that deflect and mitigate otherwise-critical injuries. Increase the wearer's Trauma Target by 1. This stacks with any existing Trauma Target bonus the armor may already confer on the wearer.

**Biostabilizing:** An integral biostatus monitor triggers emergency trauma drugs when the wearer is Mortally Wounded. As an Instant action, they roll 2d6+2 versus difficulty 8 to stabilize. Only one such attempt can be made before the suit needs an hour to recalibrate.

**Customized:** The armor is tailored to a specific wearer, granting them a +1 bonus to both ranged and melee AC while it's worn.

**Discreet Design:** The armor is carefully tailored and adjusted to be less imposing. Obvious armor is made Subtle by this mod, though it suffers a -2

penalty to its ranged and melee AC. The armor retains its original bulk, but its lines, drapes, and fabrics now appear to be particularly voluminous fashion couture rather than protective equipment.

**Flexible:** Bulky armor is carefully cut and tailored to allow a wearer the optimal range of movement. The Heavy quality of a suit of armor is removed.

**Quickchange:** The armor or clothing is designed with chroma-shifting fabrics, bi-facial texture panels, and removable accessories. As a Main Action, the wearer can shift its appearance to that of a different type of clothing or armor with the same level of obviousness. The details of this alternate appearance can be set with an hour of adjustment.

**Sealed:** The armor is equipped with a concealed filter hood and temporary pressure gaskets. As a Main Action, the user can seal the clothing against the external atmosphere, rendering them immune to gases and contact toxins. The seal and its integral air supply last 30 minutes, after which an hour of cleaning and purging will be needed to refresh the system.

**Tailored Rig:** Pouches, attachment points, holsters, and other rigging are designed for a particular wearer's body contours. They gain 1 point of Readied Encumbrance and 2 points of Stowed Encumbrance added to their maximum. These items are clearly visible to others, however, and cannot be concealed.

**Trauma Dampers:** This mod can only be installed after *Absorption Pads* are in place. Once fully engineered, they add 5 additional hit points of damage soak per fight.

**Whisperlight:** The armor's bulk is cut down and conventional materials are replaced with more advanced composites. The armor's Encumbrance decreases by 1 point.

| Armor Mod       | Skill | Cost     | Special Tech Required | Effect                                          |
|-----------------|-------|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Absorption Pads | Fix-2 | \$2,000  | 0                     | The armor gains +5 HP of soak per fight         |
| Active Response | Fix-3 | \$20,000 | 2                     | The armor increases a Trauma Target by +1.      |
| Biostabilizing  | Fix-1 | \$2,500  | 0                     | Roll 2d6+2 vs 8 to stabilize at zero hit points |
| Customized      | Fix-1 | \$1,000  | 0                     | A specific user gains +1 ranged/melee AC        |
| Discreet Design | Fix-2 | \$5,000  | 1                     | Make Obvious armor Subtle                       |
| Flexible        | Fix-2 | \$10,000 | 1                     | Remove the Heavy penalty from armor             |
| Quickchange     | Fix-1 | \$1,000  | 0                     | Change armor appearance as a Main Action        |
| Sealed          | Fix-1 | \$2,500  | 0                     | Environmentally seal armor for 30 minutes       |
| Tailored Rig    | Fix-1 | \$2,000  | 0                     | +1 Readied and +2 Stowed unconcealed items      |
| Trauma Dampers  | Fix-3 | \$10,000 | 1                     | The armor gains +5 HP of soak per fight         |
| Whisperlight    | Fix-2 | \$10,000 | 1                     | The armor's Encumbrance decreases by 1          |



| Weapon Mod          | Skill | Cost     | Tech Req. | Effect                                       |
|---------------------|-------|----------|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| Autotargeting       | Fix-1 | \$5,000  | 0         | Gain a +1 bonus to hit with the weapon       |
| Concealed           | Fix-2 | \$5,000  | 1         | Makes a weapon much harder to recognize      |
| Customized          | Fix-1 | \$1,000  | 0         | Gain a +1 bonus to hit with the weapon       |
| Extended Mag        | Fix-1 | \$1,000  | 0         | Doubles weapon mag size                      |
| Heavy Sabot         | Fix-1 | \$2,000  | 0         | Allows Traumatic Hits on drones/vehicles     |
| Integral Toxins     | Fix-2 | \$10,000 | 1         | Gain a +2 poison bonus to damage and Shock   |
| Onboard Gunlink     | Fix-2 | \$10,000 | 1         | A gun emulates the Gunlink cybersystem       |
| Predictive Guidance | Fix-3 | \$15,000 | 2         | Gain a +1 bonus to hit, damage, and Shock    |
| Reel Wires          | Fix-1 | \$2,500  | 0         | Retrieves a thrown weapon as an On Turn act  |
| Savage Impact       | Fix-1 | \$5,000  | 0         | Gain a +1 bonus to damage and Shock          |
| Shock Burst         | Fix-2 | \$5,000  | 0         | Once/fight, +2d6 electric damage, +2 Shock   |
| Stun Rounds         | Fix-2 | \$5,000  | 0         | -2 damage, half range, but non-lethal damage |
| Thermal Charge      | Fix-2 | \$7,500  | 0         | +2 heat damage and Shock for two fights      |

## WEAPON MODS

The weapon mods below are only a selection of the more common choices for street techs and high-end factory-modded gear. Note that no combination of mods can improve a weapon's hit or damage bonus by more than +3. As usual, a mod can be applied only once to any given weapon.

**Autotargeting:** The weapon has kinetic sensors embedded in it that synchronize with onboard targeting chips. The user gains a +1 bonus to all hit rolls with the weapon, but needs to connect with it via either a *Gunlink* or a *Cranial Jack*.

**Concealed:** Materials are replaced, outlines are altered, and appearances are adjusted. Pistol-sized and smaller weapons now cannot be detected without a full minute of patting down the bearer, while anything no larger than a rifle can be concealed as if it were a pistol, unfolding to full size upon use.

**Customized:** The weapon's balance and form are tailored to a specific user. That user gains a +1 bonus to all hit rolls with the weapon.

**Extended Magazine:** Caliber adjustments, feed assists, and magazine dimension alterations double a gun's reliable magazine capacity.

**Heavy Sabot:** Applicable only to projectile weapons, the gun is modified to fire heavy AP rounds that can plausibly land Traumatic Hits even on armored vehicles or heavy drones.

**Integral Toxins:** A melee or thrown weapon is impregnated with numerous microcells of an advanced hemotoxin, the cells rupturing on impact with a target. The weapon does +2 damage and Shock to subjects not immune to poison.

**Onboard Gunlink:** Usable only on firearms, the weapon's onboard targeting hardware emulates the effects of the *Gunlink* cyber-system. The user must have a *Cranial Jack* system to plug it in.

**Predictive Guidance:** An entire onboard computing core is augmented by advanced materials and cutting-edge kinetic analysis to increase the odds of landing a lethal blow. The weapon gains a +1 bonus to hit rolls, damage, and Shock. The user must be connected via a *Gunlink* or a *Cranial Jack* cybersystem.

**Reel Wires:** A thrown weapon is linked to a wrist spool with retractable wires that allow its retrieval as an On Turn action. The wires can be cut by a properly-timed attack with a sharp weapon, but are too thin and sharp to be easily grabbed. The wires can drag up to 20 kilos of mass when retracting. Replacing broken wires takes fifteen minutes.

**Savage Impact:** Usable only on melee weapons, powered impact plates, vibrating serrations, or other after-market adjustments increase its damage and Shock by +1.

**Shock Burst:** Once per fight, as an On Turn action, the weapon can imbue itself or a round of ammunition with an electrical charge, inflicting an additional 2d6 damage on a hit, or +2 damage to melee Shock on the next attack. This damage is not affected by the +3 cap to mod hit and damage.

**Stun Rounds:** Usable only on firearms, the weapon's barrel and firing mechanism is altered to accept soft, electrically-charged stun rounds. The firearm's range is halved, it takes a -2 penalty to damage, and it loses its Trauma Die, but all damage it inflicts is treated as non-lethal. Stun rounds do no significant harm to inanimate objects.

**Thermal Charge:** Usable only on melee or thrown weapons, the mod adds a bank of heat cells to the weapon. The weapon then inflicts +2 damage and Shock to all creatures not impervious to heat. The cells are activated as an On Turn action, but last for only two fights before requiring an hour to swap batteries and let the elements cool.

# PHARMACEUTICALS AND STREET DRUGS

Pharms are a normal part of street life, whether recreational or a medical remedy for some pollution-driven chronic illness. The list here is merely a small selection of the possibilities, with most of these drugs easily accessible to anyone with the slightest degree of street knowledge.

Injecting or ingesting a drug requires a Main Action. Some drugs require medical expertise to administer safely. The table gives the minimum Heal skill required to apply a drug, or "None" for those so user-friendly that anyone could shoot it up.

Some drugs grant bonuses or combat benefits. In the case that multiple drugs are taken at once, only the highest bonus applies.

**Avalanche:** A somewhat pricey combat drug favored by shock troops and those first out of the trenches, Avalanche numbs sensations of pain or exhaustion for one hour, granting the user an effective +10 to their current hit points, even if it takes them above their maximum. This numbness tends to make it harder to notice serious harms, however, and the d12 roll for any Major Injury suffered while under its effects takes a -1 penalty.

**Boneshaker:** A filthy mix of jailbroken corp industrial chems and amphetamine scrapings, Boneshaker is a popular combat drug among the most impoverished or savage street gangs. On application, the subject is filled with blind aggression, gaining a +2 Morale bonus and a +2 bonus to hit rolls, damage, and Shock. The recklessness induced by Boneshaker leaves them wide open, however, and all attacks against them add +2 to any Trauma Die rolls. Boneshaker lasts for one scene and adds 2 System Strain at the end of it.

**Chokeout:** A chem that briefly induces severe swelling of the mucous membranes, Chokeout is odorless and tasteless, but must be consumed in food or drink and naturally degrades after twelve hours. A subject who consumes a dose of Chokeout must make a Physical save; on a failure, they are strangled to unconsciousness for an hour, waking up with one hit point at the end. On a success, they take 1d10 non-lethal damage as they struggle to breathe. On a natural saving throw of 1, the victim chokes to death.

**Control-Delete:** A chemical that temporarily destroys a person's ability to form long-term memories, Control-Delete must be ingested in food or drink. Toxin-filtering cyber can fend it off, but it otherwise grants no saving throw. Once affected, the target will continue to act normally, but anything that happens to them between then and their next sleep or unconsciousness will be completely forgotten by the time they awake.

| Pharmaceutical       | Cost     | Heal |
|----------------------|----------|------|
| Avalanche            | \$100    | 0    |
| Boneshaker           | \$10     | None |
| Chokeout             | \$50     | None |
| Control-Delete       | \$25     | None |
| Hellbender           | \$100    | None |
| Lurch                | \$25     | 0    |
| Madeleine            | \$100    | None |
| Medical prescription | \$20     | None |
| Olympus              | \$100    | 0    |
| Panacea              | \$200    | 1    |
| Pillow               | \$10     | 0    |
| Psycho               | \$10     | None |
| Reset                | \$1,000@ | None |
| Sand                 | \$2      | None |
| Trauma Patch         | \$50     | None |
| Window               | \$200    | 1    |

@: This chem is rare enough to require a Contact or other connection to obtain it on the street.

**Hellbender:** A watery black toxin that must be administered through food or direct injection, Hellbender causes the victim to convulse with bone-cracking force shortly after consumption. A dose of Hellbender has a distinct acrid taste, but if the victim consumes it they must make a Physical saving throw or begin convulsing helplessly for 1d6 rounds, suffering 1d10 damage each round unless restrained by at least two associates. This damage can kill an unfortunate victim.

**Lurch:** An emergency stimulant meant to shock a downed ally back into mobility, Lurch heals 1d10 damage plus the physician's Heal skill on application, adding one System Strain to the target. Each dose of Lurch after the first each day increases the required Heal skill by one, so the third dose requires Heal-2 to successfully administer. Lurch only works on conscious and stabilized targets; the shock will kill a Mortally Wounded subject that hasn't been made stable.

**Madeleine:** A chem that intensely stimulates a subject's memory centers, Madeleine has its dangers. Users normally focus on a particular memory before injecting the drug; for the next 1d6 hours, they relive some portion of that memory with perfect fidelity while remaining oblivious to their physical surroundings. Psychological addiction is a considerable risk for long-term users, as well as choosing a less pleasant memory to recall.

**Medical Prescription:** One of a thousand different medical drugs, a prescription like this is often necessary to treat some chronic condition or keep a medical problem from growing worse. Corp employees get their drugs for a pittance, but less fortunate souls need to source their drugs from extortionate corp pharmacies or street docs. Lucky users only need a dose a few times a week, but others must have a daily supply or suffer potentially lethal complications.

**Olympus:** A “respectable” combat chem used by certain units of corporate security, Olympus numbs pain, sharpens mental focus, and slows down instinctive panic or rush instincts, allowing a calm observation of the battlefield. Users can reroll their first failed Morale check in a fight and gain a +2 bonus to hit rolls. One dose of Olympus lasts for one scene, and adds one System Strain at its end.

**Panacea:** Not so much a single drug as a pharmaceutical suite in a single injection system, this chem requires a skilled physician to adjust its mix. When used as part of a first aid attempt, this drug doubles the amount of hit points recovered by the attempt, with a minimum healing rate of 6 HP. Rumors of a drastically increased rate of bone cancers among regular users are, of course, mere slander against its manufacturer.

**Pillow:** A powerful sedative that requires medical expertise to administer properly, Pillow must be injected into a restrained or helpless subject, as vigorous physical action can disrupt the effects. Once injected, the subject falls into a torpor indistinguishable from death that lasts for 24 hours. They require only trace amounts of oxygen while in their trance, and can be identified as alive only through careful medical examination. If Pillow is administered with less than a 24-hour gap between doses, the victim must make a Physical save or die sometime before the dose ends.

**Psycho:** Ingesting one of these small pills rapidly flattens a user’s capacity for emotional distress while heavily increasing their aggressiveness. For roughly one hour, users gain a +2 bonus to Morale checks and experience no immediate emotional trauma from performing even the most heinous and violent actions. The drug is a favorite pre-fight dose among gangers, and used as self-medication among many of them who would otherwise be incapacitated by the emotional scars of what they’ve done.

**Reset:** A rare drug of desperation, Reset is a combination injector patch and wireless cyber override key. When applied to a willing subject with at least one Body or Nerve cyber system, it deluges the user’s system with safety override commands and neurotransmitter stimulants. They lose all accumulated System Strain in excess of their permanent minimum. Five minutes later, their System Strain is maximized and they must make a Physical saving throw at a penalty equal to the number of System Strain they’ve gained since the drug was taken. On a success, they drop to 1 hit point. On a failure, they become Mortally Wounded. If their adjusted roll is 1 or less, they must make a second modified Physical save or instantly and unavoidably die. Using Reset more than once a week is invariably fatal.

**Sand:** A gritty powder trafficked to those addicts too poor to afford anything better, a snorted dose of Sand will put its user into a euphoric haze for as long as an hour, depending on tolerance. Beautiful visions and dreamy contentment give way to shooting pains and intense light sensitivity afterwards, with most heavy users dying within six to twelve months of picking up the habit.

**Trauma Patch:** A theoretically foolproof cocktail of coagulants, stimulants, and painkillers, a trauma patch can be applied to a Mortally Wounded ally to stabilize them on a successful Int or Dex/Heal skill check against difficulty 6, with a +1 difficulty penalty for each full round since the subject went down. The patch is useless after six rounds.

Trauma patches cannot revive victims downed by poisons or diseases, or those dismembered by explosives or heavy weapons.

**Window:** A neurobooster favored among hackers and knowledge workers, Window augments the user’s focus and mental reaction speed at the cost of distracting them from their terrestrial surroundings. A Window user can trade their Move action to gain a bonus Main Action that can only be used for cyberspace actions. Each time this is done in a scene, however, the user gains one System Strain. One dose lasts for one scene.



# CYBERWARE

With the ubiquity and cheapness of most consumer-grade cyber, it's not uncommon for even the poorest slum dweller to sport a skinmod or a cranial jack. As with all the products of modern corp marketing, however, there's always a price to be paid for their benefits.

## INSTALLING CYBERWARE

Dutiful corporate citizens get their cyberware installed at corp-sponsored clinics by corp-trained physicians. Operators rarely have the luxury of appointments at such institutions, and many wouldn't trust them to begin with. Instead, reliable street docs do their bloody-handed work in shabby slum chop-shops and discreet private buildings, bolting on new chrome for cash in hand without asking questions or filling out product registration forms.

A street doc needs to have at least Heal-1 skill to implant cyberware; even the simplest systems are too complicated to trust to the hands of ordinary physicians. They also need a clinic, though this clinic's equipment can range from a spare cafeteria table and a case of "borrowed" medical tools to a cutting-edge computer-assisted surgical theater.

All but the most charitable street docs charge for their efforts, with the usual prices given in the adjacent table. If they donate their labor for free, the price is halved. As a rule, there are no refunds for unsuccessful operations. Installation time is one hour per System Strain of the system, to a minimum of a half-hour.

Once the necessary doctor and gear are to hand, the physician makes an Int/Heal or Dex/Heal skill check against a difficulty based on the complexity of the cyber being installed, modified by the circumstances of the surgery. The average NPC street doc has a skill modifier of +2 plus the circumstance modifiers, though high-end docs can have +3 or +4 skill mods.

**If they fail by more than two points**, the surgery is unsuccessful, the target's System Strain is maximized, and the target is reduced to 1 hit point. The cyber survives, but now counts as used cyber for future implant purposes.

**If they fail by one or two points**, the surgery is successful, but the user suffers a random implant complication from the table that follows. This glitch isn't obvious until after the surgery is complete. To try again, it must be removed and re-implanted.

**If it succeeds**, the cyber is implanted successfully.

Whether successful or not, the subject needs a certain amount of time for recovery before they can return to action, whether an hour for the most superficial cyber or a full month for full-body invasive surgery. During this time they must rest and follow the appropriate anti-rejection medication regime. Failure to do so risks implant complications at best and fatal system rejection at the worst.

### IMPLANTATION TIME AND DIFFICULTY

| Cyberware System Strain | Usual Cost | Time to Recover | Difficulty |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| 0                       | \$100      | 1 Hour          | 7          |
| 0.1 — 0.5               | \$500      | 1 Day           | 8          |
| 0.6 — 1                 | \$2,500    | 4 Days          | 10         |
| 1.1 — 3                 | \$12,500   | 2 Weeks         | 11         |
| 3.1 or More             | \$50,000   | 1 Month         | 12         |

### IMPLANTATION DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

| Mod | Circumstance                                |
|-----|---------------------------------------------|
| -1  | Only has a cyberdoc kit                     |
| +0  | Has level 1 surgical theater equipment      |
| +1  | Has level 2 surgical theater equipment      |
| +2  | Has level 3 surgical theater equipment      |
| -1  | Lacks a dedicated surgical room             |
| +0  | Has a dedicated, clean room to work in      |
| +1  | Has a sterile medical operating room        |
| +2  | Has an entire medical clinic worth of space |
| +1  | The cyber is new and unused                 |

## REMOVING CYBERWARE

Street docs can attempt to safely remove cyber at the same difficulty rating as it took to implant it, with the surgery taking one hour. On a success, the implant is removed intact and can be re-used. On a failure, the implant is ruined, but the patient remains healthy. In both cases, the permanent System Strain inflicted by the implant is lost immediately.

If the doc has no interest in the health or survival of the subject, the system removal is automatically successful and takes only ten minutes. The subject of this ungentle disassembly almost always dies on the table unless the system removed was minimally invasive.

Removing cyber is safest for the implant when the subject is alive during the removal, as death runs the risk of ruining delicate elements of the hardware. If the subject is dead when the doc goes to salvage their implants, an Int or Dex/Heal skill check is needed against difficulty 10. On a success, the implant is recovered intact, while failure means that it's ruined. Subjects dead for more than 24 hours are unsalvageable.

Once the cyber's out, the doc makes an Int or Dex/Heal skill check against difficulty 10. On a success, the cyber is used, but still perfectly functional. On a failure, it now counts as "secondhand cyber" as explained on page 65, with a randomly-determined implantation complication that can't be avoided.

## CYBERWARE MAINTENANCE

Implanted systems require regular repair, maintenance, and firmware updates in order to function at their best. Many items also require ongoing subscriptions to corporate service plans in order to maintain the licensed use of the cyberware. Operators find it a simple enough matter to wash their identifying details through widely-available fixer services, but the money has to be paid if those shiny new cyberlegs are going to keep kicking.

These maintenance and subscription expenses add up to 5% of the cyberware's base cost due monthly, not including any cyberware mods or implant surgery expenses. The maintenance work itself takes a number of hours equal to the System Strain of the system, to a minimum of fifteen minutes, and must be performed by someone with at least Fix-0 or Heal-0. Maintenance supplies can be purchased almost anywhere cyberware is available, and any reasonable dollar amount of them can be carried as 1 Encumbrance item.

If a system goes more than a month without upkeep, it starts to malfunction. The GM rolls or picks an implant complication and applies it to the system until it receives maintenance. Very extended lack of maintenance can provoke chronic illnesses or death. Some ultra-high-end bespoke ware may absolutely require timely maintenance if their complex systems are not to stop operating entirely.

## CONCEALING AND DETECTING CYBER

Most conventional cyber has one of three different levels of blatancy. Its signatures are usually restricted to the body part augmented, but obvious neural or internal organ work is usually plain on the user's skin.

**Medical**-rated cyber is completely concealed from surface-level inspection, and cannot be detected without a cyber scanner or a medical examination.

**Touch**-rated cyber is inobvious to mere visual examination, but a person who touches the augmented limb, skin, or other organ will immediately recognize the signs of cybernetic modification.

**Sight**-rated cyber is so blatant that anyone who looks at the affected body part can see that some form of augmentation has been done. Baggy clothing may suffice to conceal it, but even the most perfunctory patdown will detect it.

Ordinary investigators may not recognize the specific cyber, but experienced operators and other cyber-versed examiners can usually get a good idea of what's under a person's skin, often recognizing the specific model of cyber by its signature telltales.

Cyber that produces obvious bodily changes is likewise obvious when it is being used. A *Body Blades I* implant may be hidden under most circumstances, but slicing open some corp VIP with it is going to make it very obvious, very quickly.

## CYBERDOC TOOLS AND FACILITIES

| Item                             | Enc. | Cost     |
|----------------------------------|------|----------|
| Cyberdoc Kit                     | 2    | \$500    |
| Maintenance Supplies             | 1    | Varies   |
| Manufacturer's Installation Kit  | 1    | \$10,000 |
| Surgical Theater Tools / Level 1 | 10   | \$10,000 |
| Surgical Theater Tools / Level 2 | N/A  | \$500K   |
| Surgical Theater Tools / Level 3 | N/A  | \$5M     |

## CYBERDOC TOOLS

A corp-sponsored physician can be expected to have an excellent selection of specialized diagnostic tools, surgical implements, and pharmaceutical aids. Street docs often have to make do with much less, but there are some implements that even they can't do without.

**Cyberdoc Kit:** A portable kit with all the tools needed for maintaining cyberware, albeit the maintenance supplies cost extra. In a pinch, this kit can be used to implant or remove cyberware, though few would want to risk using such rudimentary tools. The kit can serve as a medkit at need.

**Maintenance Supplies:** A collection of consumable parts, lubricants, medications, faked subscription keys, and pirated firmware updates. Any reasonable dollar value of supplies can be carried as 1 point of Encumbrance.

**Manufacturer's Installation Kit:** These tools and technical resources are usually restricted to licensed installation vendors of a given cyberware company. They grant a +1 skill check bonus when installing or removing cyberware made by that manufacturer. They are closely tracked, and it can be difficult to find a corp doc willing to sell them under the table.

**Surgical Theater/Level 1:** A basic collection of medical tools, pharmaceuticals, scanners, technical manuals, and software subscriptions. Most ordinary street docs command this level of hardware. Laying it out for use requires at least a semi-clean room's worth of working space.

**Surgical Theater/Level 2:** A more sophisticated, extensive, and advanced operating theater than the level 1 version. High-grade street docs and standard corporate employee clinics would use this tech, which requires the same amount of space as the level 1 array.

**Surgical Theater/Level 3:** Some of the most advanced medical tech commonly available on the market, this grade of surgical assistance is usually found only in corporate clinics for high-level employees or in the private clinics of top-end street docs. It requires a half-dozen rooms to support all its functionality.

## IMPLANT COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes a less-than-perfect installation results in unfortunate side effects. These complications are tied to particular cybersystems, and the only way to stop them is to remove the offending cyber.

A user who wants a second try at installing a particular system will need to remove the original cyber, spend a month undergoing therapeutic medical treatment at a cost equal to the offending cyber's original installation cost, and then try again. Such additional attempts have a cumulative -1 penalty on all installation attempts after the original, including any penalty for re-implanting used cyber.

## SKILLPLUGS

The distilled result of years of neural research and neuromotor pattern imprinting, skillplugs can grant a user a reasonable facsimile of expertise in almost any skill. Appearing as small, brightly-colored cylinders about half the size of a cigarette, a skillplug jack and a Main Action are needed to load a plug.

Commonly-available skillplugs can be found for any skill at level-0 or level-1. A basic **Skillplug Jack I** can only interface with intellectual skills that require only modest physical expertise; Know, Fix, or Heal could qualify for this, but Shoot, Exert, or most forms of Perform would not. Such physical skills require an upgraded **Skillplug Jack II** unit.

Someone with a plug jack and the **Skillplug Wires** implant can make use of rare, costly level-2 skillplugs, or the vanishingly rare level-3 plugs. Rumors persist that the more advanced plugs require the destructive disassembly of the neural tissue of an expert practitioner in order to manufacture them.

While an excellent substitute for years of practice, skillplugs have their flaws. The programmatic expertise embedded in them sometimes conflicts with the user's natural instincts or already-extant muscle memory. Whenever the user rolls a natural 2 on a skillplug-augmented skill check, or a natural 1 on a skillplug-augmented attack roll, the check or roll is an automatic failure that no reroll ability can save. The skillplug jack itself then locks up uselessly for the scene.

While it is possible to implant multiple plug jacks and use multiple skillplugs at once, the increased neural crosstalk invariably increases the chance of severe error. Each additional skillplug run after the first increases the automatic failure roll range by one point.

| Skillplug                                               | Cost     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Level-0 mental skill or conversational language mastery | \$1,000  |
| Level-1 mental skill or fluent language                 | \$10,000 |
| Level-2 mental skill                                    | \$50,000 |
| Level-3 mental skill                                    | N/A      |
| Physical-based skill                                    | x2       |

## IMPLANTATION COMPLICATIONS

| d12 | Complication                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>Unreliable:</b> The first time each day that it's important that the system function, roll 1d6; on a 1, it's nonfunctional until it receives maintenance.                                            |
| 2   | <b>Inefficient:</b> The ware incurs an additional 0.5 System Strain cost.                                                                                                                               |
| 3   | <b>Loud:</b> When the system is operating, it's loud enough to be heard clearly five meters away, making stealth impossible. Systems that are always on make this noise constantly.                     |
| 4   | <b>Fussy:</b> The required interval between maintenance is halved.                                                                                                                                      |
| 5   | <b>Bad Connection:</b> Each time the cyberware is triggered, there's a 1 in 6 chance it fails to activate and the action is wasted. Cyberware that is always on is not hindered by this.                |
| 6   | <b>Blatant:</b> Cyberware that normally requires Medical or Touch detection now becomes obvious on sight, perhaps due to excessive scarring or required surface-mount support.                          |
| 7   | <b>Debilitating:</b> Pick an attribute in some way relevant to the cyber. The attribute suffers a 1d2 point penalty to its base score that persists as long as the system remains implanted.            |
| 8   | <b>Uncooperative:</b> Add 1 System Strain if this isn't the only implant of the same category, such as Limb/Nerve/Body.                                                                                 |
| 9   | <b>Complicated:</b> The complexity of the installation increases the minimum skill level required to maintain it to either Fix-1 or Heal-1.                                                             |
| 10  | <b>Exhausting:</b> Maintenance on the system is exceptionally taxing. After it's done, the user needs to spend 24 hours of downtime resting; if they omit this, they gain 2 System Strain immediately.  |
| 11  | <b>Power Hungry:</b> The user needs to supplement the system by plugging into an urban power grid or vehicle power port for a half-hour each day. Without this, the system goes inert until re-powered. |
| 12  | <b>Petty Annoyance:</b> It has some small quirk or deficiency of fit that causes no real problem in its functionality.                                                                                  |



## CYBERWARE SYSTEMS

It's not a cyberpunk game without the cyber. This section covers some of the more common cybernetic systems available to enterprising operators and their corp-equipped enemies. Some settings may have more or less access to these gleaming implants, but most campaigns will find nothing unusual about a wired ganger NPC or an operator with an implant or four.

### BUYING CYBER

Corpers and other “respectable” types buy their cyber through their employer’s human development programs, usually at as much as a 50% discount. These discounts also come with locked-in service plans and prescription anti-rejection meds that can be ruinously expensive to acquire outside the corp. Few operators have any interest in such deals.

Freelancers, small businesses, and corporers who don’t want to be locked in get their ware through retail outlets and independent but “legitimate” cyberdocs. Prices are much higher through these outlets, but their maintenance regimens rely on generic meds and easily-acquired spares.

Street denizens, operators, and other demimonde get their chrome implanted in seedy back-alley chop shops, dirty living rooms, and gang-run “clinics”. Their wares are often secondhand cyber liberated from prior owners who no longer need it and their hygienic and medical standards usually leave much to be desired. They don’t ask questions and they don’t report product sales, so they’re often the only practical choice for professional criminals.

The richest and most successful operators often rely on elite private clinics that cater to high-spend-ing veteran ops. These elite clinics generally require a Contact to get an appointment, but they have access to both the very latest cybernetics and the surgeons and medical tech needed to implant such complex gear.

### SECONDHAND CYBER

Between organleggers, perpetual gang violence, black market dumping, and “factory seconds”, there is a relative wealth of secondhand cyber on the market for those too poor to afford something brand-new. While these systems are not as refined and reliable as virgin hardware, they’re often far more accessible to those without the backing of a corp expense account.

If in search of cheap chrome *a PC can find one feasible candidate after a week of scouting the streets*. Most used metal has drawbacks or quirks that make it totally unsuitable for an operator’s needs, and it takes time to winnow the metallic chaff and find a plausible purchase.

Once the piece is found, the player needs to determine what’s actually wrong with it. *They roll once on the Implantation Complications table*; that drawback is intrinsic to the cyber and can’t be negated even on a successful implant surgery. If the PC is lucky, it’s a trivial drawback or one that doesn’t apply to the cyber. If they’re less than lucky, it can be an intolerable flaw.

PCs with plugged-in friends have an easier time with the process. *For each Contact they have who might be able to hook them up, they can make another roll* on the Implantation Complications table. They can pick whichever of these rolled flaws they wish.

If nothing is acceptable, they need to spend more time looking. *The time required doubles with each successive attempt*; if the first week doesn’t bring success, the need to spend two weeks, then one month, and then so on until they either find something workable or give up and look for a different system.

So why go to all this grief just to get some scratch-and-dent cyberware? Because *used cyberware is half the price of new*. This discount does not apply to the ware’s maintenance costs, however.



## BODY CYBERWARE

| Ware                               | Price  | Type | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                          |
|------------------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Aesthetic Augmentation Suite       | \$50K  | Body | Sight   | 2      | Body sculpt and Cha bonus       |
| Assisted Glide System              | \$50K  | Body | Touch   | 2      | Glide from high launch points   |
| Banshee Module                     | \$30K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Mimic voices and stun enemies   |
| Cybernetic Infrastructure Baseline | \$20K  | Body | Medical | 0      | Gain Con 12 for cyber purposes  |
| Deadman Circuit                    | \$10K  | Body | Sight   | 0.25   | Fry cyber without access codes  |
| Dermal Armor/Trauma Shielding      | \$100K | Body | Medical | 1      | Add +1 to user's Trauma Target  |
| Emergency Stabilization Factor     | \$30K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Automatically stabilize         |
| Fleshmod                           | \$20K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Completely rework your body     |
| Full Body Conversion               | \$6M   | Body | Sight   | 0      | Become a full body cyborg       |
| Hemosynthetic Filter System        | \$25K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Immune to normal disease/toxin  |
| Holdout Cavity                     | \$10K  | Body | Medical | 1      | 2 Enc. of hidden body space     |
| Medical Support Readout            | \$10K  | Body | Medical | 0.25   | Gain +2 to Heal checks on you   |
| Recovery Support Unit              | \$30K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Gain 4 System Strain for heals  |
| Redundant Systems                  | \$15K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Sacrifice to avoid Major Injury |
| Retribution Shield                 | \$50K  | Body | Touch   | 1      | Burst to harm melee targets     |
| Therapeutic Control Dampers        | \$25K  | Body | Medical | 1      | Suppress an implant side-effect |
| Titan Gun System                   | \$100K | Body | Sight   | 1      | Mount a Heavy weapon            |
| Viper Sting                        | \$25K  | Body | Medical | 0.5    | Hidden drug injection system    |

**Aesthetic Augmentation Suite:** Any standard fleshmod can supply beauty, but an aesthetic augmentation suite provides not only a fleshmod's versatility, but tailored pheromones, vocal harmonizers, social cue triggers, and an absolutely inhuman visual perfection. Subjects gain a Charisma score of 14, or a +2 score bonus if already 14 or greater, up to a maximum of 18.

**Assisted Glide System:** Retractable nanofiber wings and integral boost jets allow a limited degree of flight for the user of this implant. When leaping from a high place, they gain a flight Move speed of 30m for up to two kilometers before being forced to land. Gaining altitude requires a Dex/Exert skill check against difficulty 10, however, with failure forcing a landing, and the wings can't carry them more than twice as high as the height they jumped from. By deploying the boost jets and wings as an Instant action, the user can ignore up to a hundred meters of falling damage.

**Banshee Module:** Resonant cavities are designed into the user's torso, along with an advanced amplification system. They can reproduce any sound or voice they have heard before, and at maximum volume can be heard clearly up to five hundred meters away. Once per day, as a Main Action, this sound can be used to shatter normal glass in a ten-meter line in front of the user; creatures

without ear protection in this area must make a Physical save or take 2d6 non-lethal damage.

**Cybernetic Infrastructure Baseline:** A set of standardized support implants provide a baseline degree of cyber-compatibility to a subject. They can ignore System Strain from cyber implants equal to 12 minus their Constitution score- so a PC with a Constitution of 9 could ignore three points worth of System Strain from cyber implants. PCs with a Con of 12 or more have no use for this system.

**Deadman Circuit:** A common corporate implant to discourage kidnapping and warelegging. Any attempt to remove any of the user's cyber without the right access codes will fry that hardware unless a difficulty 13 Int/Heal skill check is made.

**Dermal Armor/Trauma Shielding:** A system that can only be installed on a user with at least one level of *Dermal Armor*, the trauma shielding addition adds +1 to the user's Trauma Target. This benefit stacks with any existing *Dermal Armor* bonus to the roll.

**Emergency Stabilization Factor:** When brought to zero hit points by an injury that does not instantly kill them, the user automatically stabilizes, gaining one System Strain, and will regain consciousness at the end of the scene with 1 hit point. If they are already at maximum strain, this cyberware does not function.

**Fleshmod:** Careful surgery and support implants allow for a complete physical remodeling within generally humanoid lines, including alterations of sex, height, cosmetic limbs such as tails or decorative ears, and overall weight. Reproductive ability is not conferred, but rumors persist of experimental mods that can grant even that.

**Full Body Conversion:** The user's brain and central nervous system are transplanted into a cutting-edge synthetic shell at a cost and difficulty as if this cyber took 4 System Strain. Once converted, the subject has an effective Constitution of 20 for System Strain purpose, but cannot be healed by conventional first aid or medical drugs, requiring ten minutes of repair work with a toolkit to repair any amount of damage, and \$250 worth of parts for each hit point to be restored. A full conversion borg no longer requires food, water, air, or sleep, but each day without the latter adds one System Strain due to the mental stress. The conversion requires twelve hours of maintenance every two weeks, and missing it will result in the user's death in 2d6 days unless the omitted maintenance is performed. Current full-body conversion tech is unstable; after 1d4 years, the subject has a cumulative 5% death chance each year. Borks do not take Major Injuries and gain a +6 bonus to their Trauma Target that stacks with existing bonuses.

**Hemosynthetic Filter System:** A wide-spectrum array of blood scrubbers, intake filters, and microbial barriers grants the user effective immunity to most natural diseases and non-synthetic toxins. Weaponized toxins and certain exotic natural afflictions can still affect the user, but they get a +2 bonus on all saving throws against them. The system automatically alerts the user if they have been exposed to a recognized disease or toxin, whether or not it affects them.

**Holdout Cavity:** A biosculpted torso pocket allows for the air-tight, climate-controlled concealment of 2 Encumbrance worth of items inside the user's body and their easy access with a Main Action. Any given object stored can't be larger than a pistol or a tightly-folded suit of clothing, and the pocket's contents don't count against the user's Encumbrance limit. The pocket's signature is disguised against conventional scanning technology, and it cannot be detected without a manual strip search by a trained examiner.

**Medical Support Readout:** A diagnostic system is interfaced with the user's biological processes, allowing a realtime analysis of their current health and any significant injuries. Aside from immediately alerting the user when they are poisoned, diseased, or injured, it grants any healing or medical support skill check a +2 bonus thanks to the diagnostic information and increases first aid or drug healing by +2 HP per application.

**Recovery Support Unit:** A number of support systems and blood purification filters are installed. The user can absorb up to four points of System Strain incurred from healing or wound stabilization effects; this is a separate pool that recovers one point every night at the same time as the user's natural System Strain recovers.

**Redundant Systems:** Several pieces of prosthetic support cyber are preemptively installed to mitigate future trauma. When the user takes a Major Injury, they may instead choose to have the *Redundant Systems* critically damaged instead of accepting the major injury roll result. *Redundant Systems* can be installed more than once, but the System Strain inflicted increases by one point each time.

**Retribution Shield:** Numerous small projectile launchers are embedded under synthetic skin. When triggered as an On Turn action, the user gains one System Strain to launch a cloud of shrapnel around them, acting as ground zero of a frag grenade explosion. The user has enough targeting control to avoid hitting allies in range. If grappling or grappled at the time, their opponent automatically takes maximum damage. Reloading the Retribution Shield takes five minutes, and the system will not function if the user is wearing suit-grade armor. Lesser armor can usually be tailored to expose adequate amounts of skin.

**Therapeutic Control Dampers:** A set of customized medical and therapeutic implants are used to control the side-effects of a partially-successful cyberware implant. For each implantation of this system, the user can choose to ignore one implant side-effect they currently suffer. The skill check to implant this system can fail, but it never induces any side effects on its own.

**Titan Gun System:** Usable only by full body conversion cyborgs or subjects with a Strength score of 18, this mount allows the installation of any man-portable Heavy weapon such as those on page 57. The user counts as a stable firing rest, and the weapon has two integral magazines of ammo, though it can be loaded by hand as well. The specific weapon mounted can be swapped during maintenance.

**Viper Sting:** A tool of assassins, a *Viper Sting* is a fang, fingernail needle, palm injector, or more exotic implement for injecting an unsuspecting target with a drug of the user's choice. A *Viper Sting* can be loaded with up to four doses of pharmaceuticals, dispensed as the user wishes. If loaded with a toxin, it does 1d12 damage with a 1d10/x3 Trauma Die. If a tranquilizer is used, the damage is the same, but unconsciousness will result instead of death. A *Viper Sting* can only be effectively used as part of an Execution Attack, as an alert opponent can avoid it easily. This cyber inflicts a -2 penalty on any check to detect its presence.



## HEAD CYBERWARE

| Ware                       | Price  | Type | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                        |
|----------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|-------------------------------|
| Courier Memory             | \$10K  | Head | Medical | 0.25   | Carry locked Memory data      |
| Cranial Jack               | \$1K   | Head | Touch   | 0.25   | Link to jack-equipped gear    |
| Discretion Insurance Unit  | \$10K  | Head | Medical | 0.5    | Cranial bomb with remote key  |
| Eye Mod/Dazzler            | \$15K  | Head | Medical | 0.5    | Dazzle enemies within 5m      |
| Eye Mod/Flechette Launcher | \$20K  | Head | Medical | 0.5    | Surprise light pistol attack  |
| Funes Complex              | \$40K  | Head | Medical | 1      | Gain eidetic memory           |
| Medusa Implant             | \$20K  | Head | Obvious | .5     | Prehensile hair implants      |
| Neural Buffer              | \$40K  | Head | Medical | 1      | Gain 3 HP/level vs hacker dmg |
| Skull Citadel              | \$100K | Head | Medical | 2      | Armor the brain against harm  |

**Courier Memory:** One unit of cranial Memory is installed with a subdermal upload pad. The person uploading the data can set a passphrase; while the implant user can erase the data, they can't download it again without the passphrase, which is usually told only to the data's intended recipient. Courier memory is exceptionally well-hidden and even medical scans take a -2 penalty to find it.

**Cranial Jack:** A discreetly-placed plug socket in the user's head or neck allows interfacing with cyber-decks and gear equipped with a jack line.

**Discretion Insurance Unit:** A small cranial bomb that can be keyed go off when it receives- or does not receive- certain codes or transmissions. Its unfortunate tendency to misfire its anti-removal protocols makes it an unpopular choice for use in anyone but the most disposable subjects. Removing this cyber is done at a +2 difficulty, and failure causes the death of the subject and a Physical save to avoid the death of the physician, with 5d6 damage taken on success.

**Eye Mod/Dazzler:** This mod can emit a dazzling strobe of intense light, dazing and disorienting those standing up to five meters in front of the user. The strobe is triggered up to once per round as an On Turn action and adds one System Strain. Victims without eye protection must make a Physical saving throw or take a -4 penalty to their AC and hit rolls for the next 1d6 rounds. A victim can be targeted by this dazzling only once per scene.

**Eye Mod/Flechette Launcher:** A holdout weapon designed for surprise short-ranged attacks, this eye has been loaded with a small explosive flechette. It has the statistics of a light pistol, has a range of 10 meters, and requires a Main Action to reload its single-round magazine. If used against a target in melee range who does not suspect its existence, a normal hit roll is made; on a miss, it does full normal damage anyway, and on a hit, the damage is doubled. It can be used for Execution Attacks.

**Funes Complex:** A synthetic eidetic memory is granted by this implant, with formalized bodies of knowledge easily cross-referenced and recollected. Once per day, as an Instant action, reroll any failed Int-based skill check. This memory can be difficult to control, however, and unwanted allusions can overwhelm the desired datum. If the user rolls a natural 2 on any Int skill check, it automatically fails and cannot be recovered by any rerolling ability.

**Medusa Implant:** These prehensile cranial tendrils take multiple forms, from thick armored cables to bundles of brightly-colored articulated polymer fibers not unlike normal hair. The tendrils are shoulder-length under most circumstances, but can extend to manipulate objects up to three meters distant with the agility of a human hand. The bundles are not very strong, however, and cannot lift more than ten kilograms. Like other extra limbs, they do not grant extra actions, but can hold and use items as any other limb could.

**Neural Buffer:** A system favored by hackers, a *Neural Buffer* rearranges the user's brain topography, making it more difficult to harm the user with neural feedback. The user gains an additional 3 hit points per level that can only absorb cyberspace damage from *Stun* or *Kill* Verbs. These phantom hit points refresh completely each hour.

**Skull Citadel:** The user's head is augmented with independent blood oxygenation pumps, armor plating, and trauma buffers designed to keep the brain intact even after the rest of the body is critically damaged. Barring dismemberment or the use of high-powered ammunition directly on the target's head, the subject ignores head-affecting Major Injuries and can be stabilized even as long as ten minutes after their technical "death". Each such delayed revivification permanently reduces a randomly-chosen attribute by 2 points, however. This ability damage cannot be undone.

## SKIN CYBERWARE

| Ware                   | Price  | Type | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                           |
|------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|----------------------------------|
| Dermal Armor I         | \$40K  | Skin | Medical | 1      | AC 16, +1 to Trauma Target       |
| Dermal Armor II        | \$80K  | Skin | Touch   | 2      | As I, but AC 18 and Shock resist |
| Dermal Armor III       | \$200K | Skin | Sight   | 3      | As II, but AC 20 and +2 TT       |
| Poseidon Implants      | \$30K  | Skin | Touch   | 1      | Aquatic adaptation mods          |
| Sealed Systems Implant | \$15K  | Skin | Medical | 1      | Trigger a temp space suit        |
| Sharkskin Electrodes   | \$20K  | Skin | Touch   | 1      | Shock grapplers                  |
| Skinmod                | \$250  | Skin | Sight   | 0      | Make cosmetic-level body mods    |
| Skyborn Shielding      | \$40K  | Skin | Sight   | 2      | Orbital hab lifestyle mods       |

**Dermal Armor I:** Subtle dermal weave reinforcement grants a base ranged and melee AC of 16 and a +1 bonus to the user's Trauma Target.

**Dermal Armor II:** Heavier subcutaneous plating acts as *Dermal Armor I* with a base ranged and melee AC of 18. In addition, the user can ignore the first instance of Shock in a round.

**Dermal Armor III:** Overt ceramic body plating and double-mesh joint reinforcement acts as *Dermal Armor II*, but with a base ranged and melee AC of 20 and +2 to the user's Trauma Target.

**Poseidon Implants:** These implants allow the user to function normally while submerged for an indefinite period, drawing any necessary oxygen or drinking water from the surrounding salt or freshwater. Normal temperature extremes are managed without difficulty, and pressure can be handled down to depths of one kilometer. Visual augments and pressure gradient sensors allow the equivalent of normal sight up to 30 meters even in lightless water, and miniaturized support jets allow three-dimensional movement at twice the user's normal Move rating.

**Sealed Systems Implant:** When triggered as an Instant action, implanted shields deploy and skin-weaves energize to seal the user off from hostile external environments. For the next six hours, the user can operate as if wearing a vacuum suit, ignoring vacuum, contact poisons, non-immediately-lethal levels of radiation, toxic gases, low or high-pressure atmospheres, and environmental temperature hazards short of open flame. After deployment, the implant needs an equal time of recovery before it can be deployed again.

**Sharkskin Electrodes:** An implanted mesh of electrodes beneath the user's skin allows them to deliver debilitating shocks while grappling a target, even if both are heavily clothed. At the end of each round of grappling, the user inflicts 2d6 non-lethal electrical damage on anyone they grapple or who is grappling them. The shielding built into the cyber automatically negates non-lethal electrical damage for the user and halves lethal shocks.

**Skinmod:** Various neon tattoos, skin texture and color changes, and other superficial physical mods can be performed with no real systemic burden beyond the usual need for regular maintenance.

**Skyborn Shielding:** A set of implants and skin treatments meant for those who spend extended periods in hard vacuum, this implant can be triggered as an Instant action. When deployed, the user gains the benefits of a *Sealed Systems Implant* and low-G microjets that allow 30m/round flight in microgravity conditions. *Skyborn Shielding* can operate for up to 72 hours before needing an hour of downtime to regenerate.

## LIMB CYBERWARE

| Ware                        | Price  | Type | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                                  |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| Body Blades I               | \$10K  | Limb | Medical | 1      | <i>Integral body weaponry</i>           |
| Body Blades II              | \$25K  | Limb | Sight   | 2      | <i>Larger body weaponry</i>             |
| Cyberlimb                   | \$10K  | Limb | Touch   | 0.5    | <i>Prosthetic with storage space</i>    |
| Iron Hand Aegis             | \$40K  | Limb | Touch   | 1      | <i>Deflect one ranged hit per scene</i> |
| Limbgun                     | \$30K  | Limb | Touch   | 1      | <i>Implanted gun in a limb</i>          |
| Muscle Fiber Replacement I  | \$50K  | Limb | Touch   | 1      | <i>Str 14, or +2 if higher</i>          |
| Muscle Fiber Replacement II | \$200K | Limb | Sight   | 2      | <i>Str 18 and extreme feats</i>         |
| Neolimb                     | \$25K  | Limb | Sight   | 1      | <i>Add a new additional limb</i>        |
| Omnihand                    | \$10K  | Limb | Touch   | 0.25   | <i>Toolkit hand, +1 check 1/day</i>     |
| Shock Fists                 | \$10K  | Limb | Touch   | 1      | <i>Do electric fist damage</i>          |
| Stick Pads                  | \$15K  | Limb | Touch   | 0.5    | <i>Climb sheer or vertical surfaces</i> |
| Synthlimb                   | \$25K  | Limb | Medical | 0.5    | <i>Lifelike artificial limb</i>         |

**Body Blades I:** Assorted retractable blades and spikes are implanted in the user's limbs. Their unarmed attacks do 1d8 damage, Shock of 2/15, Trauma Die 1d8/x3 and can be rolled with either Stab or Punch as the relevant combat skill. The Punch skill does not add damage to *Body Blades* attacks. When not in use, the blades are perceptible only to a medical scan.

**Body Blades II:** As level one, but the user's body armament includes not only conventional blades, but assorted improvements such as monomolecular edges, cutting vibrations, or thermal augmentation. Their unarmed attacks do 2d6 damage with a Shock of 4/15, and a Trauma Die 1d10/x3. Anyone who sees or touches their arms can detect signs of the cyber, however.

**Cyberlimb:** A standard medical-grade cyberlimb, albeit one Encumbrance worth of non-weapon equipment or storage can be implanted in each limb and remain Readied without counting against the character's Encumbrance. Add the equipment cost to the limb. The limb provides power to any electronic equipment implanted.

**Iron Hand Aegis:** Absorption plates and kinetic ablation units are implanted in the user's arms and linked with a reactive ballistic calculator. Once per scene, as an Instant action, the user can deflect a successful ranged bullet, arrow, or thrown weapon attack, including burst or suppressive fire. Surprise attacks cannot be deflected this way, nor can melee attacks or explosives.

**Limbgun:** A ranged weapon is implanted into an arm, tail, or other significant limb, along with space for two magazines worth of ammunition. A full reload of this space can be accomplished as a Main Action. Limbguns can be used with *Gunlink* cyber, count as Readied at all times, and can be used even while both hands are occupied, but can be bound up in melee as normal guns can. Limbguns have an intrinsic +1 hit bonus, in addition to whatever bonus the implanted weapon may have. The maximum size of the gun is Encumbrance 1 for legs or neolimb tails, or Encumbrance 2 for arms. The buyer must supply the gun. Different guns can be swapped in as desired during the system's monthly maintenance, but once implanted, a gun is useless for later conventional use.

**Muscle Fiber Replacement I:** Artificial muscle fibers are implanted as replacements for the user's own flesh. The subject gains a Strength score of 14, or +2 if already 14 or higher.

**Muscle Fiber Replacement II:** The subject gains a Strength score of 18, and can smash through standard interior doors or equivalent barriers as a Move action.

**Neolimb:** The user gains an additional limb that normal humans lack. Usual choices involve an additional pair of arms or manipulatory mechano-tentacles, though functional prehensile tails are popular too. One installation of the cyber covers paired limbs or a single tail or body-mounted tendril up to 3 meters long. Neolimbs can support up to one Encumbrance point of non-weaponry built-in tech and add two items to the user's Readied encumbrance allowance. Neolimbs can hold or grip objects, but cannot employ additional shields or grant extra actions.



**Omnihand:** A full array of small mechanical and electronic tools are folded into this cybernetic hand. The user is never without the tools for relevant skill checks, and once per day as an Instant action can gain +1 on any skill check involving the omni-hand's tool use. As an improvised weapon, the tools do damage as a knife.

**Shock Fists:** The user's hands are implanted with subdermal electrical webbing. As an Instant action, accept one System Strain; for the rest of the scene, the user's unarmed attacks do an additional 1d8 electrical damage on a successful hit. Unarmed

attacks augmented with this mod are non-lethal if desired. This system does not stack with **Body Blades**.

**Stick Pads:** Macroscale van der Waals generators allow the user's hands and feet to stick to vertical or overhanging surfaces, their full weight supported by one arm. They can climb such surfaces at their full movement rate with one free hand.

**Synthlimb:** A high-grade cyberlimb that's indistinguishable from an organic body part by anything short of a medical examination. It functions as a *Cyberlimb* for purposes of implanted equipment.

## SENSORY CYBERWARE

| Ware                         | Price | Type    | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                          |
|------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Active Sense Processor       | \$50K | Sensory | Medical | 1      | Gain +1 Wis mod for senses      |
| Cybears (pair)               | \$10K | Sensory | Touch   | 0.25   | Noise-filtering synthetic ears  |
| Cybeyes (pair)               | \$10K | Sensory | Sight   | 0.25   | Flash-protected synthetic eyes  |
| Ear Mod/Filter               | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Get +2 on hearing skill checks  |
| Ear Mod/Positional Detection | \$15K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Map all sound positions nearby  |
| Ear Mod/Sonar                | \$20K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Sense surrounds as if visually  |
| Ear Mod/Tracer               | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Eavesdrop on specific targets   |
| Eye Mod/Impostor             | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 1      | Mimic retinal patterns          |
| Eye Mod/Infrared Vision      | \$5K  | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | See heat patterns in the area   |
| Eye Mod/Low Light Vision     | \$5K  | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | See in low-light conditions     |
| Eye Mod/Tactical View        | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Get transmission, search better |
| Eye Mod/Zoom                 | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | 500m telescopic vision          |
| Gunlink                      | \$25K | Sensory | Touch   | 1      | Bonus when using firearms       |
| Headcomm                     | \$1K  | Sensory | Medical | 0.25   | Silent radio or phone comms     |
| Sensory Recorder             | \$10K | Sensory | Medical | 0.5    | Record 3 hours of sense input   |
| Syntheads (pair)             | \$25K | Sensory | Medical | 0.25   | Lifelike artificial ears        |
| Syntheyes (pair)             | \$25K | Sensory | Medical | 0.25   | Lifelike artificial eyes        |

**Active Sense Processor:** Augmented sensory processing grants a +1 Wisdom modifier for all skill checks involving sensing or noticing things, up to a +2 modifier maximum.

**Cybears:** While normal in appearance, touch reveals the synthetic nature of these ears. Some owners prefer to style them in fanciful or unnatural ways. While the base model provides only normal human hearing, all are equipped with ear protection against loud noises. A pair of cybears or syntheads halves the System Strain cost of ear implants.

**Cybeyes:** While a single cybernetic eye can be implanted, it is recommended that both be replaced at the same time to improve neural adaptation. These cybeyes are clearly artificial, though most

are styled in attractive or striking fashions. They all have perfect 20/20 vision and integral flash protectors, but additional functionality must be implanted separately. A user with a pair of cybeyes or syntheyes halves the System Strain cost of cybernetic eye implants.

**Ear Mod/Filter:** The user's sense of hearing is sharpened remarkably, allowing them to follow individual conversations in a noisy crowd, eavesdrop on whispers up to twenty meters distant, and gain a +2 bonus on all hearing-related Notice checks.

**Ear Mod/Positional Detection:** This ear mod constructs a spatial map of significant surrounding sounds, allowing the user to know the exact location of anything making audible noise. The precise location of distant shooters, the location of

targets in visual concealment, and the positions of moving creatures in darkness are all clear.

**Ear Mod/Sonar:** The user can navigate even in darkness or while blinded by means of ultrasonic sensors, being able to construct a crude map of people and obstacles in front of them out to 20 meters. This sense is the equivalent of vision, though it can't discern details more subtle than faces.

**Ear Mod/Tracer:** As an On Turn action, the user can nominate a target within 20 meters. Until they get more than 100 meters away from the user or pass behind a solid barrier, the implant's hyper-specific hearing can track their motions perfectly and overhear anything they say or that is said to them. The user can listen to one such target at a time.

**Eye Mod/Impostor:** Aside from allowing free alteration of eye color, this mod allows the user to copy another person's retinal patterns. Provided they are within two meters, they need only meet the user's gaze for a few moments to get a good imprint. The eye can store up to a dozen imprints, but it takes a Main Action to shift from one to another. Note that it is a relatively simple procedure to alter a person's retinal pattern, so an important target alerted to the imposture may end up changing their imprint.

**Eye Mod/Infrared Vision:** The infrared vision this mod allows permits basic navigation in dark areas and makes the presence of heat sources such as humans, engines, and infrared tripwires very obvious. The user gains a +1 bonus on any Notice checks to detect the presence of thermally-unshielded living creatures.

**Eye Mod/Low Light Vision:** This mod grants low-light vision, allowing clear sight to normal distances in any light condition better than pitch blackness.

**Eye Mod/Tactical View:** These eyes can receive text or video transmissions and play them on an inset in the user's normal vision. Outline and pattern discrimination is enhanced; when specifically looking for things or keeping watch, gain a +1 bonus to any relevant Notice check.

**Eye Mod/Zoom:** The user's vision can zoom in on distant targets. The user can see objects within 500 meters as if they were standing next to them. The hit penalty for a ranged weapon's long range is eliminated.

**Gunlink:** Hardwired control points interface with the onboard targeting systems of most modern firearms. When using a modern firearm, the PC ignores range penalties and negates up to 2 points of hit penalties for cover, concealment, or prone targets. Once per scene, as an Instant action, they can reroll a missed attack roll with a gun.

**Headcomm:** An implanted phone/short-range radio that can directly communicate within 100 meters or use the phone grid, if it's available. For cranial security reasons, only text and voice can be transmitted, but conversations can be held without audible vocalization.

**Sensory Recorder:** The user can record up to 180 minutes of sensory input. If they have a jack line into a transmitter or cyberware capable of transmitting data, they can share these recordings in real time or afterwards.

**Syntheears:** This model of artificial ear is designed to be indistinguishable from normal ears, though they have all the properties of a normal pair of cyberears.

**Syntheyes:** These high-end cybereyes are designed to be indistinguishable from normal eyes under anything short of a medical examination. Any additional mods made to the eyes share this subtlety.

## MEDICAL CYBERWARE

| Ware                          | Price  | Type | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                          |
|-------------------------------|--------|------|---------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Prosthetic Cyber I            | \$5K   | None | Sight   | 1      | <i>Mitigates a Major Injury</i> |
| Prosthetic Cyber II           | \$15K  | None | Medical | 0.25   | <i>Mitigates a Major Injury</i> |
| Regulated Anagathic Substrate | \$200K | None | Medical | 1      | <i>Prolongs human lifespan</i>  |

**Prosthetic Cyber I:** One of an array of minimally-adequate and very obvious organ replacements, eye prosthetics, neural patches, and other medical cyber. Prosthetic cyber grants no benefits over ordinary flesh, but can mitigate a Major Injury as explained on page 41. Patients who've lost an arm or leg don't need this cyber; they need a serviceable new limb system such as a *Cyberlimb* or *Synthlimb*.

**Prosthetic Cyber II:** A more sophisticated and expensive version of basic prosthetic cyber, inobvious to anything but a medical scan and far less burdensome on the user's system.

**Regulated Anagathic Substrate:** This whole-body network of chem regulators can prolong human lifespans by up to 1d4+2 decades. Maintenance on this cyber costs \$50,000 a month, however, and interruptions have catastrophic consequences. Rumors persist of even more effective models existing among the megacorp ultra-elite.

## NERVE CYBERWARE

| Ware                         | Price  | Type  | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                           |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|---------|--------|----------------------------------|
| Coordination Augment I       | \$50K  | Nerve | Medical | 2      | Dex 14, or +2 if higher          |
| Coordination Augment II      | \$200K | Nerve | Touch   | 3      | Dex 18 and +10m Move             |
| Enhanced Reflexes I          | \$100K | Nerve | Medical | 2      | 1/scene, bonus Main Action       |
| Enhanced Reflexes II         | \$250K | Nerve | Medical | 3      | 1/scene, bonus Main and Move     |
| Enhanced Reflexes III        | \$750K | Nerve | Touch   | 4      | 2/scene, bonus Main and Move     |
| Reaction Booster I           | \$50K  | Nerve | Medical | 1      | +2 Init and Snap Attack benefits |
| Reaction Booster II          | \$100K | Nerve | Medical | 2      | Automatically win initiative     |
| Remote Control Unit          | \$10K  | Nerve | Touch   | 2      | Remote control drones/vehicles   |
| Skillplug Jack I             | \$10K  | Head  | Touch   | 0.25   | Use level-1 intellectual plugs   |
| Skillplug Jack II            | \$25K  | Head  | Touch   | 0.5    | Use level-1 plugs of any kind    |
| Skillplug Wiring             | \$50K  | Nerve | Medical | 1      | Boost skillplug max to level-3   |
| Trajectory Optimization Node | \$50K  | Nerve | Medical | 1      | 1/scene turn a miss into a hit   |
| Zombie Wires                 | \$60K  | Nerve | Medical | 2      | Keep acting at zero HP           |

**Coordination Augment I:** The user's natural mind-body interface is tightened. The subject gains a Dexterity score of 14, or +2 if already 14 or higher.

**Coordination Augment II:** As *Coordination Augment I*, but the subject gains a Dexterity score of 18, and their base Move rate is increased by 10 meters.

**Enhanced Reflexes I:** Neural acceleration matrices can be deployed to briefly boost the user's reaction speed. Once per scene, as an On Turn action, the user gets a bonus non-cyberspace Main Action.

**Enhanced Reflexes II:** Once per scene, as an On Turn action, the user gains a bonus non-cyberspace Main Action and Move action. By accepting one System Strain, this ability can be used as an Instant action, potentially interrupting incoming attacks if the user moves out of reach.

**Enhanced Reflexes III:** Twice per scene, as an On Turn action up to once per round, the user gains a bonus non-cyberspace Main Action and bonus Move Action. By accepting one System Strain, this ability can be used as an Instant action.

**Reaction Booster I:** These implants grant a +2 bonus to your Initiative, perhaps making you act before the rest of your team. Once per scene, as an Instant action, ignore *Snap Attack* hit penalties.

**Reaction Booster II:** As level one, but the user automatically wins initiative against targets that don't also automatically win initiative; if both have this ability, initiative is rolled without modifications. The user can act normally during surprise rounds.

**Remote Control Unit:** A neurally-integrated control link allows for near-range control of drones or remote-rigged vehicles, as per page 81.

**Skillplug Jack I:** A discreet head-mounted plug port allows use of an intellectual skillplug for a skill requiring minimal physical ability, up to level-1. Once slotted, a skillplug takes fifteen minutes to boot up and integrate properly.

**Skillplug Jack II:** This improved plug jack allows use of either an intellectual skillplug or one requiring physical expertise, up to level-1.

**Skillplug Wiring:** A neural wiring connection improves a skillplug jack's limits to allow up to level-3 skill usage. One set of wires can support any number of jacks, but at least one is needed.

**Trajectory Optimization Node:** This cyber can calculate the optimal path for bypassing defenses and striking a target. Once per scene, as an Instant action, turn a missed hit roll into a success. Melee and unarmed attacks can be used as-is, but using this unit with a ranged attack requires an active *Gunlink* with the weapon.

**Zombie Wires:** Functioning only for a user with at least one Body cybersystem to serve as a motor substrate, "zombie wires" allow a user to keep functioning even at zero hit points. As an Instant action at zero hit points, the user can give their body a one-sentence command involving physical action. Their insensate flesh will blindly carry out that action for up to six rounds until it is complete or they take up to one quarter of their maximum hit points in further damage, which will kill them instantly. Time spent under *Zombie Wires* counts against a user's stabilization time limit. Triggering this cyber adds 2 System Strain.



## CYBERWARE MODS

As with weapons, armor, drones, and many other varieties of gear, cyberware can also be modded by a sufficiently talented medic. These adjustments void any warranty on the system, of course, and may result in unfortunate long-term effects up to and including insomnia, nausea, rashes, hallucinations, psychosis, death, or unintentional explosion. Even so, most operators are largely unconcerned with the consequences of manipulating their base biological matter in unplanned ways, so long as the results are useful.

These mods use the same rules as given on page 46, though the would-be cybertech must have the requisite skill level in both Fix and Heal to mod or maintain these complex devices. Some mods require “special tech”, restricted tech or components with limited availability.

Unless specified otherwise, a given cyberware mod can only be installed once on any given system. The same mod may be installed on multiple different cyber systems, however, if a tech is willing to manage the Maintenance they will require.

Cyberware mod costs are expressed as a percentage cost of the system they're installed on. It costs more to tune up an *Enhanced Reflexes* system than a common synthlimb. Mod costs do not increase maintenance costs for the system.

### COMMON CYBERWARE MODS

**Biocapacitors:** The first System Strain cost that the cyber would normally exact in a day is ignored. Thus, the first time an *Enhanced Reflexes* system is triggered, it would not add System Strain to the modded user.

**Durable System:** A limb or eye system is up-armored to resist injury. The next Major Injury directed at the modded limb is treated as if it were just a flesh wound roll of 12. It destroys this mod instead.

**Firewalled:** The modded system is much harder to hack, inflicting a -2 penalty on any related skill checks.

**Hardened Weave:** Skin cyber that grants an improved base armor class such as *Dermal Armor* has any AC it grants improved by +2. The additional armor makes the system Obvious, regardless of its original subtlety, and counts as one item of Readied encumbrance that cannot be dropped.

**Low Maintenance:** The modded system no longer requires any significant maintenance. This mod does not work on systems with special maintenance costs or consequences, such as a *Full Body Conversion* or a *Regulated Anagathic Substrate*.

**Monoblade:** A bladed cyber system has advanced monomolecular cutting elements installed. The edge is difficult to maintain but inflicts horrific injuries when it strikes cleanly. The weapon's Trauma Die gets a +1 bonus, but its base damage die and Shock is decreased by -2.

**Profile Adjustment:** The system's obviousness is lowered by one step, from Sight to Touch, or Touch to Medical. It has no benefit for a system that is already at a Medical grade of concealment.

**Quick Detach:** Usable only on limb cyber, eyes, or other parts that could conceivably be removed, this mod allows the user to attach or detach the system with five minutes of work, and replace it with any other *Quick Detach*-modded system that would fit in the same place.

**Tailored Interface:** A demanding cyber system is adjusted to specifically match the biochemistry of the user rather than using a factory-set best approximation. This mod only functions on cyber that inflicts 2+ points of permanent System Strain, but lowers the strain cost by 1 point.

**Targeting Processor:** This mod must be installed in *Gunlink*, or in a weapon system such as *Body Blades* or *Eye Mod/Flechette*. Improved targeting calculations grant a +1 bonus to hit with the cyber-weapon or with guns aimed with the *Gunlink* system. An attack can only ever benefit from one instance of this mod.

| Cybersystem Mod     | Fix/Heal | Cost | Special Tech | Effect                                           |
|---------------------|----------|------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Biocapacitors       | 1/2      | 30%  | 1            | Ignore first System Strain trigger cost per day  |
| Durable System      | 1/1      | 20%  | 0            | Sacrifice mod to negate a Major Injury           |
| Firewalled          | 1/1      | 20%  | 0            | -2 penalty to all rolls to hack this cybersystem |
| Hardened Weave      | 2/1      | 30%  | 0            | +2 AC, but Obvious and +1 Readied enc.           |
| Low Maintenance     | 2/2      | 10%  | 1            | The cyber system has zero maintenance costs      |
| Monoblade           | 2/1      | 20%  | 0            | +1 to weapon Trauma Die, -2 dmg/Shock            |
| Profile Adjustment  | 1/2      | 20%  | 0            | Makes cybersystem one step less obvious          |
| Quick Detach        | 2/2      | 30%  | 0            | Detach or re-attach with 5 minutes of work       |
| Tailored Interface  | 1/3      | 30%  | 1            | -1 System Strain for systems with 2+ Strain      |
| Targeting Processor | 2/1      | 30%  | 0            | +1 to hit with Gunlink or cyber weapon           |

# CYBERDECKS

An assassin needs a weapon, a doc needs a medkit, and a hacker needs a cyberdeck. These laptop-sized computers range from scrap-built makeshifts to cutting edge hardware stolen from the very best corps. All of them have certain important qualities.

**Bonus Access** reflects the onboard intrusion hardware integral to the deck. It augments the user's base Access score, which is equal to their Intelligence modifier plus their Program skill plus this bonus Access.

**Memory** is the number of memory units standard to the deck. Most programs and paydata files take up one unit of memory. Erasing a program from memory is an Instant action, but loading it off a program chip takes fifteen minutes to complete all its linkages.

**Shielding** is the amount of buffer circuitry and hardwired signal damping the deck can use to lessen incoming damage to the user. Hit point losses inflicted by the *Stun* or *Kill* program Verbs deplete the deck's Shielding before affecting the user. Shielding regenerates after fifteen minutes of calm.

**CPU** indicates the number of programs the deck can run at once. Some programs are Immediate, and self-terminate right after executing, while others are Ongoing, and take up a CPU slot until terminated as an Instant action.

## MODDING CYBERDECKS

To no one's surprise, most hackers love to modify their decks with aftermarket parts and salvaged components. While some do so out of poverty, others can afford to take a solid deck and improve it even further.

Cyberdeck mods use the same modding rules as given on page 46, with each deck mod counting against the tech's Maintenance score.

Prices are given as percentages of the original deck's unmodified cost; the more sophisticated the deck, the more expensive it is to improve it. Unless specified otherwise, a deck mod can be applied only once to a given deck.

## COMMON CYBERDECK MODS

The mods given below are merely some of the most popular among hackers, installed as per the rules on page 46. Stranger hardware is always emerging from the street, and some of it is good enough to replicate. These mods can even be applied to bare cranial jacks, if relevant, provided the tech also has Heal equal to the Fix required for the mod.

**Bespoke Code Optimization (Fix-1):** Pick one Verb and one Subject when installing this mod; those utilities occupy no Memory and one instance of that Verb-Subject program doesn't count against its CPU burden. Costs 20% of the base deck cost.

**Buffer Circuits (Fix-1):** Add 5 points to the deck's Shielding rating. Costs 20% of the base deck cost.

**CPU Overclocking (Fix-2):** Add one to the deck's CPU rating. Costs 30% of the base deck cost.

**Memory Expansion (Fix-1):** Add four units of Memory to the deck. Costs 20% of the base deck cost.

**Polymorphic Intrusion Algorithms (Fix-1):** Add one to the unit's Bonus Access but subtract one from its CPU rating. Costs 10% of the base deck cost.

**Skeletal Case (Fix-1):** The deck's Encumbrance value is decreased by 1, but its Memory suffers a -2 penalty. Costs 10% of the base deck cost.

**Thermal Exhaust Case (Fix-2):** The deck's Encumbrance value is increased by 1, but its CPU value increases by 1 as well. Costs 30% of the base deck cost.

| Deck                 | Cost      | Bonus Access | Memory | Shielding | CPU | Enc |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|-----|-----|
| Cranial Jack Only    | As cyber  | 0            | 0      | 0         | 1   | N/A |
| Scrap Deck           | \$500     | 1            | 8      | 5         | 2   | 1   |
| Yamagata Tanto       | \$5,000   | 1            | 10     | 10        | 3   | 1   |
| Redding Tech Icepick | \$15,000  | 2            | 10     | 10        | 3   | 1   |
| Alliance Synapse     | \$30,000  | 2            | 11     | 5         | 4   | 1   |
| Legau-Durach Beowulf | \$60,000  | 2            | 13     | 10        | 4   | 1   |
| Nova Vida Tizona     | \$100,000 | 3            | 11     | 10        | 5   | 1   |
| Guang Taifu          | \$250,000 | 3            | 13     | 15        | 6   | 1   |

# DRONES

Small wheeled, rotoed, or even aquajet-driven drones are common tools for modern operatives. While any moderately-trained user can wirelessly pilot a drone with a control board and a joystick, true artistry requires dedicated drone control cyberware.

## DRONE BASICS

Most operators rely on man-portable drones that can be carried in packs or specially-designed harnesses. These portable drones require a Main Action to unpack and deploy before they can be commanded, in addition to any action necessary to get at a Stowed item.

Once a drone has been deployed, the user must bring it online and ready for command using a control board or a **Remote Control Unit** cybersystem. This takes both a Main and a Move action on the user's part. Once it's been brought up, the drone can be commanded until it's packed again, which requires a Main Action.

A controlled drone automatically relays audiovisual sensor data back to the control board or **Remote Control Unit** cyber being used to control it. A pilot can see and hear what their drones see and hear. Default sensors are as acute as normal human senses.

Flying drones operate by means of rotors and directed thrust and can hover in place. Ground-based drones can navigate stairs and other obstacles that human legs could manage. The noise made during operation is no louder than speech.

Flying drones have an operational altitude maximum of 1,000 meters, and all drones have a safe default control range of 1,000 meters. Beyond this range, control signal latency leaves them critically vulnerable to modern signal hijacking tech; all wireless hack or jamming attempts against them are automatically successful. Their theoretical maximum control range is 8,000 meters.

Drones operate for one hour on a full battery charge. They do not have swappable batteries, and require one hour of charging per Encumbrance, or six hours at most.



## DRONE STATISTICS

Most drone statistics are self-explanatory; they have an Armor Class against both ranged and melee attacks, a Trauma Target against weapons capable of inflicting Traumatic Hits on it, a Move rate that is either ground-based, flying, or swimming, and a hit point total that can be depleted to destroy them.

**Fittings** indicates the maximum number of drone fittings that can be mounted on the drone.

**Hardpoints** are the number of ranged weapons that can be mounted on the drone. Drones with a base, unmodified Encumbrance of 3 or less can mount only pistol-sized weapons, while larger man-portable drones can mount rifle-sized ones. Non-portable drones can mount heavy weapons that the GM finds plausible. Melee weapons cannot be practically mounted on a drone, and swapping weapons takes a day in the shop.

Weapons mounted on a hardpoint include one magazine of ammo. If more is needed, the **Ammo Supply** fitting is required.

| Drone                | Cost     | AC | TT | HP | Fittings | Move       | Hardpoints | Enc |
|----------------------|----------|----|----|----|----------|------------|------------|-----|
| Shintetsu Mouse      | \$500    | 13 | 6  | 1  | 0        | 5m ground  | 0          | 1   |
| BanTech Roach        | \$1,000  | 13 | 6  | 8  | 3        | 10m ground | 0          | 3   |
| Sui Hummingbird      | \$2,000  | 15 | 6  | 5  | 2        | 10m fly    | 0          | 3   |
| BanTech Sunfish      | \$1,000  | 15 | 6  | 8  | 3        | 10m swim   | 0          | 3   |
| Lem Robotics Pitbull | \$5,000  | 15 | 8  | 15 | 5        | 20m ground | 1          | 5   |
| NAMU Javelin         | \$10,000 | 16 | 6  | 12 | 5        | 20m fly    | 1          | 6   |
| Kessler Kerberos     | \$15,000 | 18 | 8  | 25 | 6        | 20m ground | 3          | -   |
| Sui Kraken           | \$10,000 | 16 | 8  | 20 | 5        | 15m swim   | 2          | -   |
| NAMU Shrike          | \$25,000 | 18 | 8  | 20 | 6        | 30m fly    | 2          | -   |



## DRONE TYPES

While these specific models are in common circulation in the underworld, numerous smaller corps and subsidiaries market similar drones.

**Mouse:** Little more than a fist-sized drive core with wheels, Shintetsu's Mouse is about as small as a functional drone can get with its low-cost technology. Incapable of supporting more than its basic functionality, it still provides eyes and ears for a pilot in a cheap, portable format.

**Roach:** One of numerous similar models, the BanTech Roach is one of the smaller wheeled drones on the market, popular among pilots who need a little more usable mass and power than a flying drone this size could muster.

**Hummingbird:** The Sui Hummingbird is the smallest flight-capable drone of any practical use to most pilots. It has very limited loadout options, but its small size allows for several different drones to be carried by the pilot.

**Sunfish:** BanTech has tried to make an opening in the aquatic drone market with the Sunfish, an easily-portable swimming drone that can still mount a few useful loadout options.

**Pitbull:** Lem Robotics has sold more than a million of these wheeled patrol drones to megacorps and governments around the world. Needless to say, a significant number of them have fallen into private hands.

**Javelin:** NAMU's Javelin is a workhorse among operatives in need of a sturdy flying drone with a considerable equipment loadout. While bulky, even small-framed pilots can usually carry a packed Javelin along with their usual gear.

**Kerberos:** Built on a large motorized tricycle chassis, the Kessler Kerberos is one of the largest ground drones in general production. Most serve as urban patrol units for municipal governments, though their heavy armor and sturdy construction have endeared them to operators in need of a heavy gun platform.

**Kraken:** While weighing more than a hundred kilos when fully loaded, Sui's Kraken still fits into the trunk of most car-sized vehicles and can be deployed when aquatic operations are needed.

**Shrike:** NAMU's largest drone model, the Shrike is most often used in active war zones, though most major corp security hubs keep a wing on hand for drastic situations. Three meters long with meter-wide vector wings, the Shrike can handle a substantial combat load.

## DRONE MODS

A pilot who has skills as a mechanic can make modifications to their drones with aftermarket parts and personal customizations. These mods require that the tinkerer have both Fix and Drive skill, as the adjustments require a keen understanding of their practical consequences on handling and operation.

Mods require upkeep and count against the tech's Maintenance total, as explained on page 46. Unless specified otherwise, a given mod can only be applied once. Drone mods don't need special components.

**Additional Fitting (Fix-1 & Drive-1):** Careful optimization of power lines and chassis reinforcement allows for adding an additional fitting to the drone. Man-portable drones add one point of Encumbrance, though this doesn't affect their maximum hardpoint weapon size. The cost is 50% of the drone's base cost.

**Additional Hardpoint (Fix-1 & Drive-1):** By rearranging wiring, adding mass, and overriding safety protocols, an additional hardpoint can be added to a drone. This mod adds one point of Encumbrance to portable drones, though this doesn't affect their maximum weapon size. The cost is 50% of the drone's base cost plus the weapon.

**Battery Swapping (Fix-1 & Drive-1):** Replacing proprietary battery systems with off-the-shelf models allows man-portable drones to have their battery swapped with a minute of work. Backup batteries cost 10% of the drone's base cost and count as Enc 1 items, and this mod itself costs 10% of the drone's base cost.

**Boosted Engine (Fix-1 & Drive-2):** The drone's engines are tuned to optimize speed, increasing its Move rate by 10m. It costs 25% of the drone's base cost.

**Heavy Plating (Fix-1 & Drive-2):** Strategic armor reinforcement improves its base AC by 2, but decreases its Move rate by 5m. It also increases its effective Encumbrance by 1 if it's man-portable. The cost is 25% of the drone's base cost.

**Quick Launch (Fix-1 & Drive-2):** A packed man-portable drone is modified to deploy itself as an On Turn action by its controller instead of a Main Action, even if it's currently Stowed. The cost is 10% of the drone's base cost.

**Redundant Systems (Fix-2 & Drive-2):** Careful duplication of critical systems increases the drone's hit points by 25% of its unmodified base score, rounded up. The extra mass increases the Encumbrance of man-portable drones by 1. The cost is 50% of the drone's base cost.

**Stripped Fittings (Fix-2 & Drive-1):** Mass and power allocated to a man-portable drone's fittings are removed. The drone's maximum fitting total is decreased by 1 and its Encumbrance rating is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. The cost is 10% of the drone's base cost.

## DRONE FITTINGS

While a stock drone is useful for remote observation, most operators prefer to buy aftermarket option packages that enable additional drone functionality. Each of the fittings below counts as one choice against a given drone model's maximum fittings.

### COST MULTIPLIERS

Putting *Emissions Shielding* on a portable Roach is cheaper than trying to shield a trike-sized Kerberos. Fitting costs are a multiple of the base cost of the drone they're applied to, so putting the shielding on a \$1,000 Roach costs \$200.

### FITTING OPTIONS

Most of these fittings can be installed only once on any given drone, though a few specifically allow multiple installations.

**Ablative Code Buffer:** Numerous self-correcting back-up circuits are wired in to delay any hostile hacking intrusions. The drone automatically succeeds on the first opposed skill check made against a hostile hacker in a given scene.

**Altitude Boost Unit:** Most flying drones have an effective ceiling of 1,000 meters if there are no scramblers to lessen the effective control range. This unit increases a flying drone's maximum altitude to 5,000 meters, making most effectively invisible to ordinary sight. Such height does, however, make it extremely conspicuous to aerial scanners used by city law enforcement and high-security corp buildings. The speed of their response will depend on the drone's apparent threat.

**Ammo Caddy:** A specialized form of cargo space, this drone is able to carry and dispense substantial amounts of ammunition to adjacent allies. It can hold up to 6 fully-loaded magazines in quick-release clips that can be grabbed as On Turn actions by an ally. The clips remain locked for strangers. This fitting can be taken up to once per two points of the drone's Encumbrance, rounded up.

**Ammo Supply:** An automated ammo feeder is added to the drone. Two full magazines are added to one mounted weapon's allotment, or one magazine to two weapons. This fitting can be added more than once.

**Assisted Boost Burner:** The drone is equipped with reactive chemical booster that can be ignited to give it a very brief burst of tremendous speed. When activated as a Move action, the burner launches the drone up to 500 meters in a straight line. The boost is not precise enough to use as an aimed weapon, but solid obstacles in front of the drone will suffer half the drone's HP in damage and inflict all of theirs on the drone. The burner

| Drone Fitting            | Cost |
|--------------------------|------|
| Ablative Code Buffer     | 10%  |
| Altitude Boost Unit      | 10%  |
| Ammo Caddy               | 10%  |
| Ammo Supply              | 10%  |
| Assisted Boost Burner    | 10%  |
| Cargo Space              | 20%  |
| Command Deck/Follow      | 10%  |
| Command Deck/Kill        | 25%  |
| Command Deck/Patrol      | 10%  |
| Command Deck/Watch       | 10%  |
| Emergency Evac Litter    | 25%  |
| Emissions Shielding      | 20%  |
| Enhanced Structure       | 25%  |
| Extended Range           | 25%  |
| Glider Grips             | 20%  |
| Improved Armor           | 25%  |
| Improved Targeting Logic | 20%  |
| Laser Comms              | 10%  |
| Manipulator Tendrils     | 20%  |
| Memory Banks             | 10%  |
| No Touch Web             | 10%  |
| Sleep Mode               | 10%  |
| Stealth Package          | 25%  |
| Suicide Charge           | 25%  |
| Telescopic Optics        | 20%  |
| Thermal Optics           | 20%  |
| Trauma Response Suite    | 25%  |
| Voice Broadcast          | 10%  |
| Wallcrawler              | 20%  |
| Weapon Hardpoint         | 25%  |

functions only once before it require a scene to regenerate its charge.

**Cargo Space:** Most drones are designed to carry only their own weight. This fitting upgrades engines and adds cargo mounts to the drone's exterior; it can carry up to 3 points of Encumbrance now, but the drone's own Encumbrance value is increased by one. Any additional cargo it carries is added to this burden, of course. Carried cargo is sealed within the drone and requires a Main Action to dig out.



**Command Deck/Follow:** The drone is equipped with minimal autonomous pursuit capabilities. As a Main Action, the drone can be ordered to follow a particular visible target at a given distance at either half or full speed. If half speed, it will use its Move action to follow, and full speed will use both Move and Main Actions. Following can be ended as an On Turn command.

**Command Deck/Kill:** The drone has autonomous attack routines wired into it. As a Main Action, it can be ordered to kill one specific visible target. If the target is in range of its weapons, it will use its Main Action to attack; if no additional fittings are added, its autonomous attacks have a total hit bonus of +2. The drone will not automatically move to follow or engage its target or otherwise position itself tactically unless directly piloted to do so or operating under the Follow command.

**Command Deck/Patrol:** As a Main Action, the drone can be ordered to autonomously move to one or more waypoints on whatever schedule the pilot wishes. The drone can also be ordered to loiter at a particular location until it gets an On Turn command to proceed to the next location.

**Command Deck/Watch:** The drone is equipped to monitor its surroundings autonomously and alert its pilot when something of interest is noticed. Its onboard intelligence is limited, however, and it can only handle about a sentence's worth of specific orders or subjects to be watchful for. Putting a drone in Watch mode is a command that takes a Main Action.

**Emergency Evac Litter:** Functioning only for ground-based drones of Enc 3 or greater, the drone is equipped with a retractable litter that can fit one human patient, along with manipulators suffi-

cient to get a prone victim onto the litter with a Main Action. Onboard meds allow for remote Heal skill checks to stabilize a Mortally Wounded target, with one attempt allowed as part of the loading action. A loaded patient can't be harmed until the drone is destroyed or opens the litter, but if the drone dies, the patient does too. As a Main Action, the drone can be ordered to autonomously take the patient to a particular location. As an On Turn action, an onboard transmitter can also place a call for medical assistance to a pre-arranged number.

**Emissions Shielding:** The drone is designed to minimize its electromagnetic emissions and thermal signature. Skill checks to spot it with such sensors suffer a -2 penalty.

**Enhanced Structure:** The drone's maximum hit points increase by 25% of its unmodified base, rounded up. As with *Improved Armor*, this fitting is ineffective on drones that aren't man-portable.

**Extended Range:** The drone can now operate for two hours on a full battery charge.

**Glider Grips:** Usable only by flying drones of Enc 3 size or greater, this fitting allows a human-sized mass to use the drone as a form of parachute-glider. As a Main Action, a user can leap off a high place after grabbing the drone and descend safely to the ground at a distance as far from the initial point as that point was above the ground. Similar weights can be sent safely to the ground in the same way.

**Improved Armor:** The drone's AC improves by 2, to a maximum of 18, but its Encumbrance rating increases by one. This fitting is ineffective on drones too big to have an Encumbrance rating; they need vehicle-grade armor upgrades.



**Improved Targeting Logic:** This unit allows a skilled drone pilot to tweak the combat logic of its on-board weaponry. The drone's attack gains a hit bonus equal to the pilot's Drive or Program skill level when firing autonomously; no bonus is given if the pilot is in direct control.

**Laser Comms:** This fitting provides both a set of universal transceiver plug-ins and a laser comm hub for the drone. Provided the PCs are in line of sight of the drone, normal radio-wave based comms can be switched to lasers, providing uncrackable, electromagnetically-inaudible communications within the group. Radio comms can still be used as needed.

**Manipulator Tendrils:** One set of manipulators is added to the drone, whether a mechanical claw, an articulated metal tendril, or some other device. With a Main Action command from the pilot, it can function as a single human hand with an effective Strength of 12, but it cannot effectively be used for an attack or to lift anything heavier than the drone itself. The fitting can carry things for short distances, but to haul weight any real distance the *Cargo Space* fitting is required. This fitting can be added more than once if a pair of "hands" are needed.

**Memory Banks:** The drone has two units of cyberdeck Memory added to it. While this Memory can be used to store hacker programs or datafiles, it also has room to record up to a week of audiovisual data per unit used. This fitting can be added more than once.

**No Touch Web:** Most commonly installed on small ground drones, this web can be armed as a Main Action by the pilot. Until disarmed, any attempt to grab or pick up the drone automatically inflicts 2d6 non-lethal electrical damage on the grabber. This shock continues each round as long as the drone is held, with up to 5 discharges total before the battery must be recharged. The firm contact required makes it impractical to use the web as an offensive weapon.

**Sleep Mode:** Sleep mode can be enabled with a Main Action command or ended with an On Turn command. While in sleep mode, a drone cannot fly, move, or perform actions, but it will continue to communicate with the pilot and observe its surroundings. A day of sleep mode counts as ten minutes of ordinary operation for battery drain purposes.

**Stealth Package:** Usable only on drones of Enc 3 or smaller, this fitting adds color-changing drone sheathing, noise damping, and thermal sealing to the unit. It gains an effective Sneak-1 skill when operating autonomously, or a +2 bonus to Sneak checks when being directly piloted.

**Suicide Charge:** With a Main Action command to detonate, the drone will explode, doing 3d6 damage to anyone within ten meters, with an Evasion save for half. Subjects behind solid cover further halve the damage. Drones reduced to zero hit points are too badly damaged to respond to detonation commands.

**Telescopic Optics:** The drone can focus on objects up to one kilometer away with a visual acuity sufficient to read a newspaper. Integral low-light sensors allow it to see in all but total darkness.

**Thermal Optics:** The drone is equipped with IR optics that can see heat patterns. The drone can function adequately even in complete darkness and grants the pilot a +1 bonus to Notice skill checks where thermal imaging might be useful.

**Trauma Response Suite:** An array of injectors, scalpels, sutures, and trauma chems are built into the drone, allowing it to function as a medkit and make Heal skill checks for a medically-competent pilot or an on-site doc in need of a kit. Such medical efforts require a Main Action from the pilot as usual, and flying drones apply a -2 penalty to the skill check due to their innate instability. Up to six pharmaceutical doses of the pilot's choice can be loaded into the drone.

**Voice Broadcast:** The pilot can speak through the drone or cause it to emit other noises at a volume loud enough to be heard clearly a hundred meters away.

**Wallcrawler:** Usable only on ground-based drones of Enc 3 or less, this fitting allows the drone to climb sheer surfaces at its normal movement rate, assuming the surface is sturdy enough to bear its weight. Most high-security buildings are constructed with veneers that defeat this fitting, but ordinary structures seldom have such measures.

**Weapon Hardpoint:** Drones that are not factory-equipped with weapon hardpoints can have one worked in as an aftermarket addition. The usual hardpoint limits on maximum allowed weapon size still apply, however, and this fitting counts as two for purposes of the drone's maximum fittings.

## DRONE OPERATION

Operating a drone can be done either with the control board that comes with the drone or with a specialized **Remote Control Unit** cyber system. In both cases, at least Drive-0 skill is needed to operate drones effectively.

- A control board can command one drone at a time. The user suffers a -2 penalty on all hit rolls and skill checks made by the drone. If the user has a cranial jack and plugs into the board, this penalty is eliminated. A control board takes up 1 Encumbrance and must be Readied to use.
- A **Remote Control Unit** can command a number of drones at once equal to one plus the user's Drive skill. It grants the user a bonus Move action each round that can only be used to command drones. If the user pushes the system and accepts a System Strain point, this bonus Move action is upgraded to a Main Action.

Drones can be operated relatively securely at a distance of up to 1,000 meters, with flying drones having a maximum altitude of 1,000 meters as well. Beyond one kilometer, signal latency makes it trivially easy to hijack the control signal with modern wifi sniffers. Any hack or jamming attempt on a drone beyond this range is automatically successful. If the operator is willing to risk this, drones can function at a maximum range of 8,000 meters.

### CONTROLLING DRONES

Pilots use their own actions to drive their drones. If the pilot wants the drone to take a Move action, they need to spend a Move action piloting it in the desired direction. If they want it to fire its guns, they need to spend their own Main Action performing the attack.

A drone under autonomous command, such as with the **Command Deck/Kill** fitting, can perform a maximum of one Main and one Move action per round, and will use those actions to carry out its last command. In case of conflicting autonomous imperatives, the latest one overrides earlier ones.

Any attacks the drone makes are performed with the operator's hit bonus plus the better of their Drive or Program skills, modified by Int or Dex. If the drone is autonomous, it usually has a native +2 bonus.

Any skill checks the drone makes are performed with the operator's skill level, up to a maximum of the pilot's Drive skill. They may be a master infiltrator with Sneak-4, but if they've only got Drive-0 skill they can exert only Sneak-0 through the drone.

Drones cut off from control by jamming or operator abandonment or incapacitation do nothing, not even performing autonomous commands. Flying drones automatically land where they are.

### COMMON DRONE ACTIONS

When in doubt, a GM can simply assign a drone action the same cost as they would the same action performed by a PC. However, some common actions have special cases for drones and are listed as such below.

**Attack (Main Action):** The drone fires all of its on-board weapons, selecting targets for each individually. The pilot may direct one attack, adding their base attack bonus modified by Int or Dex and the better of their Drive or Program skills; all others fire at the drone's usual attack bonus of +2.

**Move (Move Action):** The drone moves its normal movement rate. Flying drones can hover, and ground drones can navigate rough terrain just as a human would, moving at half their usual rate. Prudent placement may grant a drone the benefits of cover or concealment, but they can't go Prone.

**Assume Command (Main and Move Actions):** A pilot who needs to assume command of one of their newly-deployed drones can do so by taking both a Main and Move action to shift the signal. Uncommanded drones remain inert and will not act autonomously. Dropping control to free up the pilot's attention is an On Turn action.

**halt Autonomous Mode (On Turn):** An active autonomous command such as Kill or Follow can be stopped with this action, the drone doing nothing until a new command is issued.

**Grab a Drone (Main Action):** Man-portable drones can be grabbed by assailants in melee range. This counts as a grappling attempt with a hit roll required, but the drone automatically fails any Exert skill checks to resist. A grappled drone is helpless while the grip is maintained.

### DRONE DAMAGE AND REPAIR

A drone reduced to zero hit points has been destroyed, and cannot be repaired. Any cargo it might have been carrying has almost certainly been smashed as well.

Repairing a portable drone requires a suitable toolkit, Fix-0 skill, and a supply of spare parts. Non-portable drones require a full workshop. Repairs take one hour of work.

Spare parts for a drone cost 25% of the drone's base cost. As manufacturers make a point of not building cross-compatible components, each model of drone requires its own supply of parts. These parts are sufficient to repair any reasonable amount of damage, though more than one or two full rebuilds may cause the GM to rule that they've run out.

Spare parts for a portable drone take up 3 Encumbrance. Parts for a non-portable drone are too bulky to be reasonably man-portable.

# VEHICLES

No operator wants to take the bus forever. Some teams go so far as to include driving specialists, men and women capable of getting the team to the mission site without interruption and away from it without being caught. These specialists need very good wheels.

An *Ace Driver* or *Roamer* PC has a budget they can use to acquire this hardware without spending any of their own money. This budget can be used to pay for vehicles, their fittings, mods, any mounted weapons, and any ammo costs involved in feeding them. It cannot be used to buy vehicles or guns the PC couldn't otherwise acquire; if they can't find someone selling a CASRA, they can't buy it with their Focus budget.

Vehicles acquired with a Focus can't be sold to others, though they can be lent for missions or short jobs. They're too idiosyncratic and customized for ordinary drivers to handle them for very long.

## REPAIRING AND RUNNING VEHICLES

Fixing a vehicle requires a *Tool Rack* fitting or a suitable workshop. A bike might be repaired on a sidewalk, but an APC is going to need heavier equipment.

Vehicles that have been reduced to zero hit points have been totaled and cannot be cost-effectively repaired. Lesser damage can be repaired at a rate of 1 point per day, plus the technician's Fix skill and Drive skill. A would-be repairman must have at least Fix-0 or Drive-1 skill to repair a damaged vehicle.

An *Ace Driver* or *Roamer* pays nothing to repair vehicles, being able to scrounge free parts here and there. Others need to pay \$200 per vehicle hit point repaired.

A vehicle's fuel and maintenance costs are generally minor, and can usually be ignored. If the PCs are going to be spending long periods of time away from gas stations, however, a GM is justified in making them take some measures to ensure a fuel supply.

## VEHICLE STATISTICS

A vehicle's qualities are measured by certain statistics. Some are self-explanatory, such as the *Hit Points* of damage it can take before being rendered inoperable or the *Armor Class* that must be hit with a melee or ranged weapon in order to damage it.

*Speed* is a combination of the vehicle's overall speed, maneuverability, and capability for handling bad terrain. It's added to any vehicle-related skill checks the driver might make with it.

*Armor* indicates the vehicle's general toughness and resistance to damage, as explained on page 42.

*Trauma Target* is the vehicle's target number for Trauma Die rolls by weapons capable of inflicting Traumatic Hits on such a vehicle.

*Crew* is the maximum number of people the vehicle is intended to carry, including the driver. More might be wedged into a truck bed or strapped to a roof rack, but they are very likely to be thrown free during sharp maneuvers.

*Power* and *Mass* measure the amount of additional fittings that can be mounted on the vehicle. Added hardware takes up electrical and computing Power, and it can't be fitted without enough free Mass.

*Size* is the general size class of the vehicle, whether small-sized like a motorcycle, medium like a car, small helicopter, or SUV, or large like a flatbed truck or tank. Some vehicle fittings can only be installed on vehicles of a certain size or larger.

*Hardpoints* are the number of Heavy weapons the vehicle can mount in its factory configuration. Vehicle combat is detailed on page 42, but every gun requires a gunner, and even a jacked-in driver is hard-pressed to shoot and drive at the same time.

| Vehicle     | Cost         | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow. | Mass | Size | Hrdpt. |
|-------------|--------------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Motorcycle  | \$1,000      | 1   | 4     | 10 | 13 | 10 | 1    | 1    | 3    | S    | 0      |
| Micro Flyer | \$3,000      | 0   | 0     | 6  | 13 | 10 | 1    | 1    | 4    | S    | 0      |
| Car         | \$5,000      | 0   | 6     | 12 | 11 | 30 | 5    | 3    | 7    | M    | 1      |
| Truck       | \$7,500      | 0   | 6     | 12 | 11 | 35 | 2    | 3    | 14   | L    | 1      |
| Helicopter  | \$50,000     | 3   | 6     | 10 | 14 | 20 | 6    | 4    | 9    | M    | 1      |
| Tank        | \$500,000@   | 0   | **    | 12 | 18 | 40 | 3    | 8    | 15   | L    | 3      |
| APC         | \$60,000@    | -1  | *     | 10 | 16 | 30 | 16   | 5    | 14   | L    | 1      |
| GEV         | \$100,000@   | 1   | *     | 10 | 16 | 30 | 3    | 6    | 10   | L    | 2      |
| CASRA       | \$200,000@   | 2   | 10    | 10 | 18 | 35 | 2    | 7    | 10   | L    | 2      |
| Dropcraft   | \$1,000,000@ | 3   | 12    | 12 | 16 | 40 | 13   | 8    | 12   | L    | 2      |

@: This vehicle cannot be obtained without a suitable Contact or related adventure

\*: This vehicle is immune to anything short of a Heavy weapon or one that can inflict Traumatic Hits on vehicles.

\*\* : This vehicle is immune to anything the GM thinks could not reasonably harm the tank in question. It can suffer Traumatic Hits from a weapon if the GM thinks it reasonable for the weapon and circumstances.



## VEHICLE TYPES

The statistics given here are for a mid-range vehicle of its class. Particularly expensive models or those with a bare minimum of functionality might vary.

**Motorcycle:** Fast, cheap, and nimble, both gangers and operators find these vehicles handy for making escapes down alleys and over terrain that larger vehicles can't navigate.

**Microlight Flyer:** One of a class of featherlight aircraft, a flyer is woven of the lightest, thinnest, strongest materials available at its price point, and can provide cheap aerial recon or transit over rough terrain for its single occupant. Such flyers are light enough to be broken down into components that can be easily transported by a pickup truck.

**Car:** An urban luxury, private cars are for the middle class and better, or those rough-edged slum entrepreneurs who are clever enough to keep some salvaged hulk running. This vehicle class also includes small pickup trucks and SUVs.

**Truck:** More commonly found among corp employees, these flatbed trucks, delivery vans, panel vans, and other large work vehicles earn their keep in a hundred ways each day.

**Helicopter:** A typical civilian helicopter, used for elite transit between city districts or the quick dispatch of personnel to some hotspot. Their ability to weave through the obstacles of urban high-rises is sometimes valuable when evading hostile pursuit.

**Tank:** A military classic, this model is relatively low-tech but more than enough to deal with any civilian vehicle. Tanks are seldom found in urban areas without a protective screen of infantry to keep hostiles with demo charges or rocket launchers from getting uncomfortable close.

**APC:** Armored personnel carriers are often custom-built for city law enforcement, the better to dump a squad of cops where they're most needed. The mounted weapon on most of them helps pacify a hot zone before the occupants dismount.

**GEV:** Ground effect vehicles have evolved considerably from their 20th-century ancestors, and their armored pneumatic skirts and high-efficiency engines can send them over terrain that might defeat a tracked tank. The sacrifice in armor weight is generally deemed acceptable, given the usual opposition these vehicles face.

**CASRA:** The "Close Air Support Rotorwing Aircraft" of corporate R&D comes in a half-dozen different configurations, from multicopter to rotor-in-wing strike craft. Light and vicious, they're favored by city SWAT teams who need military-grade firepower capable of maneuvering through city airspace. When a CASRA shows up, minigun rounds are seldom far behind.

**Dropcraft:** One of a family of armored military air transports, dropcraft are used when a squad needs to be inserted under heavy fire. Thick armor, a heavy gun, and VTOL engines combine with considerable loitering ability to make an excellent tool for pacifying corporate enemies.



## VEHICLE FITTINGS

To add a fitting, the vehicle must have enough free Power and Mass to support it; a bike with 1 Power and 3 Mass can't mount more than 1 total Power and 3 total Mass of fittings.

Installing or removing a fitting usually takes a day or two of work in a suitably-equipped shop. The price for such work is included in the fitting cost. A given fitting can normally be added only once.

### COMMON FITTINGS

The equipment listed below are merely some of the most common choices for operator-run vehicles. Most require a vehicle of a certain minimum size in order to support a fitting as listed on the table below.

**Advanced Sensors:** The vehicle is equipped with night vision, infrared sensors, and short-range radar good up to twenty kilometers of airspace. It can be driven safely even in pitch darkness.

**Afterburners:** Once per scene, as an On Turn action, boost the vehicle's Speed by 1 for five rounds.

**Armor Plating:** Increase the vehicle's Armor rating by 3 points. Medium vehicles can apply this fitting twice, and Large ones can apply it three times.

**Cargo Space:** This fitting can be taken multiple times. Each time it adds 50 kg of protected cargo space for Small vehicles, 500 kg for Medium ones, and 2 metric tons for Large ones.

**Crash Pod:** If the vehicle crashes, the occupants can each reroll one failed crash save. If they make any of their saves, their HP can't be reduced below 1 point by the crash.

**ECM Emitter:** On a successful hit roll by a headshot pod, rocket launcher, or other long-range guided projectile, the driver can make an opposed Int or Dex/Drive skill check against the attacker's combat skill. On a success, the attacker must reroll their hit roll and take the worst result.

**Emissions Cloaking:** Once per day, for one hour, the vehicle can become almost invisible to infrared or radar. This cloak becomes useless if the vehicle is visually spotted by defenders.

| Vehicle Fitting      | Cost       | Power | Mass   | Min. Size | Effect                                 |
|----------------------|------------|-------|--------|-----------|----------------------------------------|
| Advanced Sensors     | \$8,000    | 1     | 0      | S         | Adds night vision and more             |
| Afterburners         | \$5,000    | 1     | 2      | S         | Boost Speed briefly in combat          |
| Armor Plating        | \$5,000    | 0     | 3      | S         | Adds Armor to the vehicle              |
| Cargo Space          | None       | 0     | 1      | S         | Adds protected cargo space             |
| Crash Pod            | \$2,500    | 0     | 2      | M         | Protects in case of crash              |
| ECM Emitter          | \$10,000   | 2     | 0      | M         | Jams incoming missiles                 |
| Emissions Cloaking   | \$10,000   | 1     | 2      | S         | Radar and thermal near-invisibility    |
| Extra Durability     | \$5,000    | 0     | 4      | M         | Increases maximum HP by 25%            |
| Extra Passengers     | \$2,500    | 0     | 2      | S         | Add additional Crew                    |
| Field Portable       | \$1,000    | 0     | 2      | S         | Break it down into portable components |
| Ghost Driver         | \$2,500    | 1     | 1      | S         | Limited AI driving capabilities        |
| Hardpoint Support    | \$5,000    | 1     | 1      | M         | Adds another hardpoint                 |
| Jack Control Port    | \$5,000    | 2     | 0      | S         | Can drive the vehicle via cranial jack |
| Limpet Mount         | \$5K/\$10K | 0     | 3 or 6 | M         | Mount a smaller vehicle on it          |
| Living Quarters      | \$8,000    | 0     | 4      | L         | Cramped but usable living quarters     |
| Medbay               | \$10,000   | 1     | 2      | M         | Emergency bay for one patient          |
| Offroad Package      | \$5,000    | 1     | 3      | L         | Enables deep wilderness operation      |
| Power System, Small  | \$1,000    | +2    | 2      | S         | Adds Power at a cost in Mass           |
| Power System, Medium | \$5,000    | +4    | 3      | M         | Adds Power at a cost in Mass           |
| Power System, Large  | \$10,000   | +8    | 5      | L         | Adds Power at a cost in Mass           |
| Sealed Atmosphere    | \$5,000    | 1     | 1      | M         | Pressurized, temp-controlled interior  |
| Smuggler's Hold      | \$1,000    | 0     | 1      | S         | Hidden cargo space                     |
| Targeting Board      | \$2,500    | 1     | 1      | M         | One gunner can run up to three guns    |
| Tool Rack            | \$2,500    | 0     | 2      | M         | Can repair vehicle or other things     |

**Extra Durability:** The vehicle's maximum hit points increase by 25%, rounded up.

**Extra Passengers:** Small vehicles add 1 Crew, Medium ones add 2, and Large ones add 4. This fitting can be taken multiple times, and any vehicle amenities such as crash pods or living quarters extend to these additional Crew as well.

**Field Portable:** Only Small or Medium vehicles can take this option, allowing them to be broken down into easily-portable parts packages. Small vehicles turn into 30 items of Encumbrance and Medium ones into 150. Disassembly takes 30 minutes for a Small vehicle and 3 hours for a Medium one, with reassembly taking four times as long.

**Ghost Driver:** The driver can order the vehicle directly or by radio or phone to go to particular places at particular times or perform other simple, direct actions on a given schedule. The onboard expert system can handle traffic-related challenges, but has no real intelligence to process more complicated problems.

**Hardpoint Support:** Additional power and structural support enable the addition of a hardpoint.

**Jack Control Port:** The vehicle is wired to be controlled through a plugged-in cranial jack as well as a conventional wheel. While jacked in, the driver need only use a Move Action to control the vehicle rather than a Main Action.

**Limpet Mount:** An entire second vehicle can be mounted with this fitting, Medium vehicles taking Small parasites and Large ones taking Small or Medium. Adding a mount for a Small vehicle takes up 3 Mass while a Medium one takes 6. Modifying a vehicle to be mounted adds 10% to its base cost, but it can be launched even while the parent vehicle is underway. These parasite vehicles are destroyed if the parent is; otherwise, they take only half the damage the parent takes.

**Living Quarters:** Basic, cramped quarters are provided for sleeping, sanitation, and cooking for all crew. Permanent living in a vehicle costs and counts as a slum lifestyle, though occupants with the *Ace Driver* or *Roamer* Focus can treat it as middle-class for the same price.

**Medbay:** Surgical tools and medical support are provided for up to one critically-injured patient at a time. A medbay counts as an emergency clinic for purposes of treating Major Injuries, if someone with at least Heal-0 is available to tend to the patient.

**Offroad Package:** While any modern vehicle can handle abandoned roads and mostly-flat terrain, this package includes winches, tire armor, chassis reinforcement, and other upgrades needed to go through all but the most impassible terrain.



**Power Systems:** These fittings add extra Power in battery capacity and computing support at the cost of an additional Mass burden.

**Sealed Atmosphere:** For up to two hours per day the vehicle can seal itself entirely from the outside atmosphere, with internal air tanks and positive pressure to keep out external toxins. At all times it can maintain a comfortable interior temperature in any terrestrial climate. Aircraft do not need this fitting to function normally at high altitudes.

**Smuggler's Hold:** This fitting can be taken more than once, and adds 10 kg of concealed cargo space in Small vehicles, 100 kg in Medium ones, and 400 kg in Large ones. It can be detected only by taking the vehicle apart or by an acute, careful inspection with a difficulty 12 Wis/Notice or Wis/Drive skill check.

**Targeting Board:** A single unified targeting board allows one gunner to manage up to three vehicle weapons instead of the one gun per gunner that would usually be allowed.

**Tool Rack:** Any vehicle can carry a toolkit in the trunk, but this rack is equipped with welders, heavy tooling, winches, and room for up to 40 HP worth of spare parts. It can repair any vehicle and can be used as a makeshift workshop for related efforts.



## VEHICLE-MOUNTED WEAPONRY

Vehicles with hardpoints can mount weaponry, provided they have the spare Power and Mass to support the guns.

### MOUNTING VEHICLE WEAPONS

A vehicle can mount a number of weapons equal to its hardpoints. Each weapon takes up a certain amount of the vehicle's Power and Mass, just as a fitting does; the heavier and more computationally-demanding the weapon is, the greater its demands.

Some weapons also require vehicles of a certain size in order to support them; no one is mounting an autogun on a motorcycle when the recoil alone would be enough to send the bike skidding.

While most professionals prefer to mount heavy weaponry on their rides, it's also possible to mount smaller guns, such as rifles or shotguns. These weapons make minimal demands on a vehicle's structure, but still require at least a Medium-sized vehicle to provide a stable firing platform.

### VEHICLE WEAPON AMMO AND ATTACHS

Each mounted weapon can carry one normal magazine's worth of ammunition. A loader can reload a vehicle weapon's magazine as a Main Action.

Vehicle weapons each require a gunner, and any attacks made by the weapon are made with the gunner's attack bonus and Shoot skill.

Shooting at enemy vehicles requires targeting the vehicle's Armor Class and overcoming its Armor with the weapon's damage. Armor is subtracted from any damage the weapon inflicts, after multiplying for Traumatic Hits. Shooting at targets on foot requires hitting their usual ranged AC.

Mounted weapons don't take a hit penalty for firing from a moving vehicle, but passengers who are blazing away out the windows take up to a -4 circumstance penalty to such efforts.

| Vehicle Weapon      | Power | Mass | Size |
|---------------------|-------|------|------|
| Anti-Materiel Rifle | 0     | 1    | M    |
| Drone Cannon        | 1     | 1    | M    |
| Grenade Launcher    | 0     | 1    | M    |
| Headshot Pod        | 3     | 2    | L    |
| Heavy Machine Gun   | 0     | 2    | M    |
| Main Tank Gun       | 1     | 4    | L    |
| Mounted Autogun     | 1     | 2    | L    |
| Other Small Arms    | 0     | 1    | M    |
| Rocket Launcher     | 1     | 1    | M    |
| Shrieker Gun        | 2     | 2    | M    |

### VEHICLE-ONLY WEAPONRY

These weapons are too large and bulky to be mounted on anything but vehicles or non-portable drones.

**Drone cannons** are heavy semi-automatic weapons too bulky for human portability. A round of firing costs \$100 worth of ammunition.

**Headshot pods** are a family of guided missiles meant for mounted deployment on vehicles or large drones. They always target AC 10 to hit, but require two full consecutive rounds of aiming at a visible target to get a target lock on them and prime for firing on the third round. Any bystanders within 5 meters of the impact take damage as if from a frag grenade. A headshot pod missile costs \$2,000.

**Main tank gun** attacks always target AC 10, and anyone within 10 meters of impact takes 1d20 damage if not behind heavy cover. They cannot be mounted on aircraft or anything smaller than a tank. Each round costs \$1,000.

**Mounted autoguns** are a drone cannon's big brother, for larger platforms. Each round of firing costs \$100.

**Shrieker guns** are sonic cannons used for crowd control and non-lethal suppression. While highly effective against unprotected targets, military-grade ear protection or the integral dampers in cyber-ears are sufficient to render the weapon useless.

| Vehicle Weapon  | Dmg   | Range       | Cost       | Mag | Attr. | Enc | Trauma Die | Trauma Rating |
|-----------------|-------|-------------|------------|-----|-------|-----|------------|---------------|
| Drone Cannon    | 2d8!  | 200/1,000   | \$5,000@   | 10  | Dex   | N/A | 1d10       | x3            |
| Headshot Pod    | 4d6!  | 1,000/2,000 | \$20,000@  | 1   | Dex   | N/A | 1d20       | x4            |
| Main Tank Gun   | 4d12! | 1,000/3,000 | \$100,000@ | 1   | Dex   | N/A | 1d20       | x4            |
| Mounted Autogun | 3d8#  | 500/2,000   | \$15,000@  | 10  | Dex   | N/A | 1d12       | x2            |
| Shrieker Gun    | 2d6^# | 100/400     | \$10,000@  | -   | -     | N/A | -          | -             |

@: This weapon requires an applicable Contact to buy, being generally illegal for open sale

#: This weapon can fire to suppress if fixed to a vehicle or stationary firing position

^: This weapon's damage is always non-lethal, unless desired otherwise

!: This weapon can inflict Traumatic Hits on vehicles and drones

## VEHICLE MODS

While fittings are generally available off the shelf and can be installed by any competent mechanic, vehicle mods are more delicate, individualized tweaks that require an expert to implement properly. The mods below follow the usual rules on page 46 for Maintenance and required skill levels. Most require both Fix and Drive skills to install, as they require deep familiarity with a given vehicle's handling.

While the mods below are all aftermarket adjustments, some high-end vehicles may come with one or more of these mods already installed as factory-standard. Such vehicles often come with one or more drawbacks as a concession to their higher performance.

Some mods also require one or more special components, usually very limited-run devices, exotic megacorp materials, or other esoteric ingredients that must be obtained through targeted missions or patron rewards.

Vehicle mod costs are expressed as percentages of the vehicle's base cost, not including any fittings or weapons. Unless specified otherwise, a vehicle mod can be installed only once on any given vehicle.

**Augmented Armor:** Increase the vehicle's Armor rating by 3 points.

**Drone Hub:** Install a housing that can hold a portable drone on Small vehicles or a non-portable drone on Medium or larger vehicles. The drone can be deployed while the vehicle is in motion. On-board signal encryption adds +2 to the difficulty of hacking any drone controlled by someone in or adjacent to this vehicle. This fitting can be installed twice on Large vehicles.

**Extra Seating:** Increase the maximum Crew size by 1 for Small vehicles, 2 for Medium, and 4 for Large.

**Integrated Magazines:** Mounted weapons gain one extra built-in magazine for Small vehicles, two for Medium, or four for Large. Reloading one vehicle magazine takes a Main Action.

**Personalized Controls:** The vehicle's controls are designed for the idiosyncrasies of a specific driver. Once per scene, as an Instant action, they can add +1 to a Drive skill check. Anyone else takes -1 to drive the vehicle.

**Power System Upgrade:** Increase the Power rating of the vehicle by 2 points for Small vehicles, 3 for Medium, and 4 for Large.

**Q-Cladding:** Disguise the vehicle as another vehicle of the same general type, and hide its mounted weaponry. Replacing the disguise after weapons are deployed takes five minutes.

**Reactive Defenses:** Increase the vehicle's Armor Class by 2 points, but subtract 2 points from its Armor, if it has any.

**Reinforced Chassis:** Increase the vehicle's maximum HP by 25% of its base, but subtract 2 Mass from its maximum.

**Remote Sensors:** The driver's smartphone or headware can tap the vehicle's sensors as an On Turn action, getting audio and visual from it if no special sensors are installed. This signal can reach up to two kilometers.

**Supplementary Tanks:** The vehicle can operate for up to three days of normal driving without refueling.

**Ultralight Components:** Increase the vehicle's maximum Mass by 2 points for Small vehicles, 3 for Medium, or 4 for Large. Its maximum HP decreases by 20% of its base, rounded up.

**Upgraded Speed:** Increase the vehicle's Speed by 1, but lose 20% of its maximum Mass, rounded up.

| Vehicle Mod           | Skills        | Cost | Special Tech Required | Effect                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------|------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Augmented Armor       | Fix-3/Drive-1 | 25%  | 1                     | Gain +3 Armor                            |
| Drone Hub             | Fix-1/Drive-0 | 10%  | 0                     | Drone mount and hacking resistance       |
| Extra Seating         | Fix-0/Drive-1 | 10%  | 0                     | +1/2/4 Crew based on vehicle size        |
| Integrated Magazines  | Fix-1/Drive-0 | 10%  | 0                     | +1/2/4 magazines based on vehicle size   |
| Personalized Controls | Fix-1/Drive-2 | 20%  | 0                     | Drive check bonus for specific driver    |
| Power System Upgrade  | Fix-2/Drive-2 | 25%  | 1                     | +2/3/4 Power based on vehicle size       |
| Q-Cladding            | Fix-1/Drive-2 | 20%  | 0                     | Disguise vehicle as something harmless   |
| Reactive Defenses     | Fix-2/Drive-2 | 25%  | 1                     | +2 vehicle AC but -2 vehicle Armor       |
| Reinforced Chassis    | Fix-2/Drive-1 | 25%  | 1                     | +25% maximum base HP but -2 Mass         |
| Remote Sensors        | Fix-1/Drive-0 | 10%  | 0                     | Driver can see through the car's sensors |
| Supplementary Tanks   | Fix-0/Drive-1 | 10%  | 0                     | Drive for three days between refueling   |
| Ultralight Components | Fix-2/Drive-1 | 20%  | 1                     | +2/3/4 Mass but -20% base max HP         |
| Upgraded Speed        | Fix-2/Drive-3 | 25%  | 2                     | +1 Speed but -20% base Mass              |

## EXAMPLE VEHICLES

The vehicles shown below are a few of more popular on the market at present. Most of them come with one or more fittings as factory standard, albeit often at an extra charge, and a few even have onboard weapons installed as standard. PCs who desire to mod or up-arm these vehicles as part of aftermarket work can do so as normal. Factory fittings can be pulled to free up Mass or Power and new or different weapons installed as needed.

### JANSEN CATALYST

A higher-end bike favored by prosperous gangs and corp security patrols, the Catalyst is most widely known for its stock boost system. The extra speed when it counts has saved more than one rider's skin.

### FACTORY MODS

A few vehicles have vehicle mods engineered into their basic chassis, usually twice as costly as PC installation. These mods normally require no Maintenance from a tech, but if an owner starts installing any further mods from page 87, the delicate technical balance will be disrupted and the factory standard mods will begin to require Maintenance as usual.

#### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Motorcycle

Afterburners: +1 Speed for five rounds

| Cost    | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|---------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$6,000 | 1   | 4     | 10 | 13 | 10 | 1    | 1/0       | 3/1       | S    | 0      |

### FENGHUA LANCER

This cargo van is ubiquitous in the poorer districts. Gangs often use it as a fast-response personnel carrier, while operators have been known to strip some cargo space in favor of more mission-pertinent fittings.

#### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Car

Cargo Space: 2,500 kg of cargo space

Extra Passengers: Adds 2 more maximum crew

| Cost    | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|---------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$7,500 | 0   | 6     | 12 | 11 | 30 | 7    | 3/3       | 7/0       | M    | 1      |

### LOMAX RAZORBACK

The Razorback was originally intended for sale to corp drone security staffers, but gangs and operators have come to love its ability to deploy multiple drones while hauling a team of combatants. Most buyers install extra cargo space or upgrade the vehicle's armor, though a few owners turn these trucks into mobile homes.

#### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Truck

Drone Hub x2: Mounts two Drone Hub vehicle mods as factory mods.

Extra Passengers x2: Adds 8 more maximum crew.

| Cost     | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|----------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$15,500 | 0   | 6     | 12 | 11 | 35 | 10   | 3         | 14/10     | L    | 1      |

### NAMU SPECTER

While NAMU is better known for its aircraft offerings, the Specter is a good example of a top-of-the-line exfil vehicle for urban operators who aren't willing to wrench their own ride. The standard Q-cladding mod allows it to masquerade as an ordinary corper SUV until its occupants need to make a violent and rapid withdrawal from the area. The heavy weaponry and enhanced speed comes at a cost, however, and the Specter's frame is more fragile than standard for its class.

#### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Car

Heavy Machine Gun: (3d6#! dmg, 500/2K range, 10 Mag, Trauma 1d12/x3)

Afterburners: +1 Speed for 5 rounds

Armor Plating: +3 Armor

Extra Passengers: Adds 2 more maximum crew

Jack Control Port: Can drive it with a cranial jack

Q-Cladding: Standard as a factory mod.

Ultralight Components: Standard as a factory mod

| Cost     | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|----------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$37,000 | 0   | 9     | 12 | 11 | 24 | 7    | 3/0       | 10/1      | M    | 1      |



## BADLANDS SMUGGLER

Pieced together from one of a variety of common light truck frames, this smuggler's buggy is cheap and tough. Weapons are forsaken for cargo space, but night vision sensors allow for dark running past contested borders.

### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Car  
Advanced Sensors: Night vision and radar support  
Cargo Space: 3,000 kg of cargo space  
Smuggler's Hold: 100 kg of well-hidden cargo

| Cost     | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|----------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$14,000 | 0   | 6     | 12 | 11 | 30 | 5    | 3/2       | 7/0       | M    | 1      |

## POLICE CRUISER

It's not unlikely that PCs will end up fleeing from security vehicles similar to this one. This model is standard for most common corp security or city cops, its trunk well-stocked with weaponry and spare ammo.

### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Car  
Afterburners: +1 Speed for five rounds  
Armor Plating: +3 Armor  
Cargo Space: 500 kg of cargo space in the trunk  
Crash Pod: Extra crash protection

| Cost     | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|----------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$17,500 | 0   | 9     | 12 | 11 | 30 | 5    | 3/2       | 7/0       | M    | 1      |

## NAMU CORTAIN

Available only to certified corporate or government buyers, the Cortain is a popular rotorcraft among SWAT teams and corporate fast-response squads. The standard model sacrifices specialization for general utility, being fitted to subdue riots, perforate hard targets, and insert or extract small numbers of personnel. Most fly with a pilot and two gunners, though a squad of jump-trained operators can crowd onboard to make an aerial exit when the time is right.

### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: CASRA  
Mounted Autogun: (3d8#! dmg, 500/2K range, 10 Mag, Trauma 1d12/x2)  
Shrieker Gun: (2d6^#, 100/400 range, Unlimited Mag, Non-lethal)  
Advanced Sensors: Night vision and radar support  
Armor Plating: +3 Armor  
Extra Passengers: Adds 4 more maximum crew  
Jack Control Port: Can fly it with a cranial jack  
Sealed Atmosphere: Immune to gas attacks

| Cost      | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|-----------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$250,500 | 2   | 13    | 10 | 18 | 35 | 6    | 7/0       | 10/0      | L    | 2      |

## HESSLER MJOLNIR

When a corp has decided to stop being polite, they send a Kessler Mjolnir. This corp-restricted dropcraft is built to insert up to three five to six-man fire teams into a drop zone while providing overwatch for the mission. The headshot pod can inflict catastrophic damage on anything up to and including a main battle tank, while the autogun hoses down any opposition from a safe distance overhead. While devastating to gangs or lightly-armed insurgents, the Mjolnir does remain vulnerable to massed missile fire that can penetrate its ECM and bring down its relatively fragile airframe.

### Weaponry and Fittings

Base Chassis: Dropship  
Mounted Autogun: (3d8#! dmg, 500/2K range, 10 Mag, Trauma 1d12/x2)  
Headshot Pod: (4d6!, 1K/2K range, 1 Mag, Trauma 1d20/x4)  
Advanced Sensors: Night vision and radar support  
Cargo Space: 2,000 kg of cargo space  
ECM Emitter: Skill check to force missile hit reroll  
Extra Passengers x2: Adds 8 more maximum crew  
Sealed Atmosphere: Immune to gas attacks

| Cost        | Spd | Armor | TT | AC | HP | Crew | Pow./Free | Mass/Free | Size | Hrdpt. |
|-------------|-----|-------|----|----|----|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|
| \$1,063,000 | 3   | 12    | 12 | 16 | 40 | 21   | 8/0       | 12/2      | L    | 1      |

# HACKING

Modern network computing is a far cry from the halcyon days of the early twenty-first century. Where wireless communications once promised a world of universal connectivity, the proliferation of cheap sniffers, hijack tech, and signal subversion hardware has made the empty air a wasteland. Only short-term tasks like drone piloting or cyberware hacking are performed wirelessly, because any signal up for more than a day is certain to be cracked by a dozen random bystanders.

The solution has been hardline, and it has been for decades. Countless coils of telcom fiber have been woven through the buildings and streets of virtually every city on the planet. Entire generations of lost cat12 cable, ancient copper, and outmoded fiber are buried beneath every modern thoroughfare, and you can hardly cut into an old building's wall without finding bundles of still-functional cable.

The enormous majority of this cable is dark, inert and ignored by later generations. The truly important cables, the inter-city lines and private corporate data feeds, are vigilantly monitored and maintained by aggressive physical security. Nothing goes over these lines without corp approval. Combined with ubiquitous radio jamming for "security reasons" and vigilant corporate watchfulness for unauthorized satellite transmissions, most cities know nothing more about the outside world than what their local corporations want them to know.

An ecosystem of local networks exists below the corporate mains. Running on legacy cable and leased data lines, these networks provide apps, news, entertainment, social media, and all the other services that "legitimate" companies can offer. Access to inter-city data feeds is strictly controlled by their corporate patrons, but logging in to these services allows a facsimile of free speech and a supply of numbing entertainment for the corporate masses.

Beneath these authorized networks is the "black net", the shifting landscape of criminal and subversive networks running on unmonitored cable at often-changed network addresses. Anyone with the right network address can access these places, anonymously trading illicit goods and services and talking about things the corporations would rather not have discussed. Their locations change regularly, as do their participants, and it takes a practiced fixer to keep up with their shifting tides.

## CROWNS AND VIRTUAL REALITY

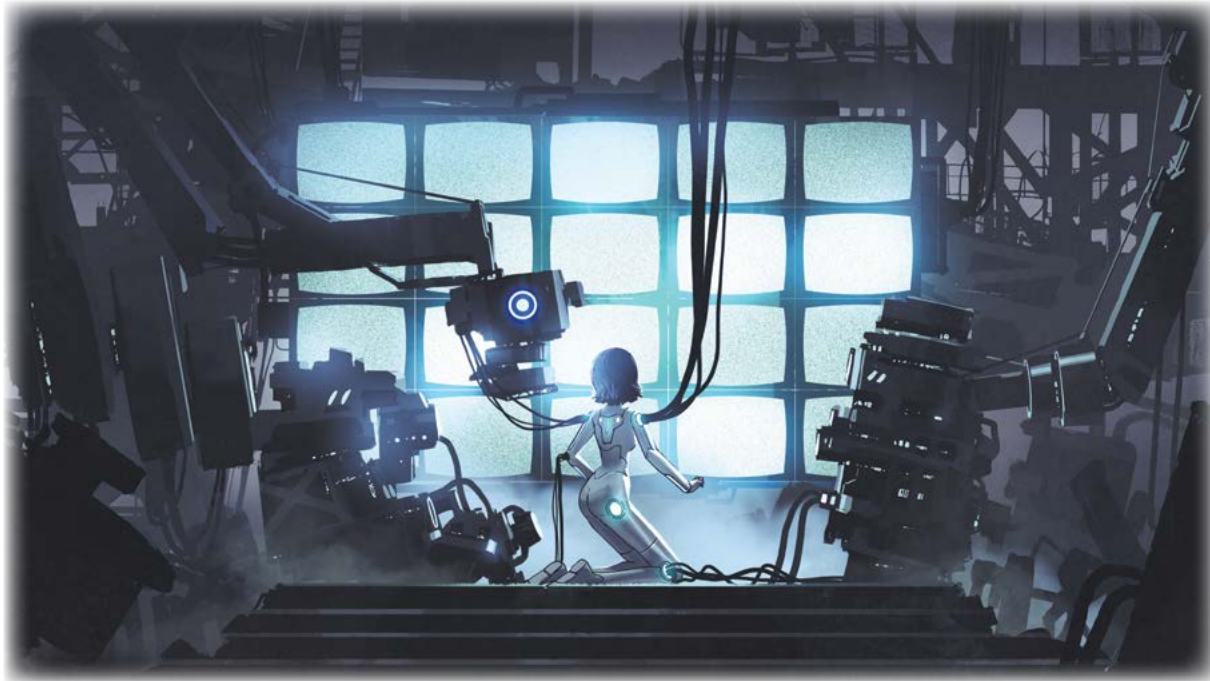
While simple text and audiovisual connections are common for social media networks and casual communications, serious users prefer to interact with the net via a "crown", an electrode headset that can function either through skin contact or direct connection to a user's cranial jack. Crowns range in price from cheap mass-produced trode circlets to stylish haute couture fashion accessories, and the quality of their sense translation and responsiveness tends to match.

With a crown, a user's sensorium can be hijacked to present a wholly false reality. While their body lies inert and insensible, their mind voyages through synthesized landscapes and experiences artificial sensations and sensory stimuli. The artificiality of the experience is always there, if a user pays attention; the emotions a little distant, the sights a little too processed, the sounds and smells a trifle too absolute. Even so, a high-quality crown running a top-grade sim can give an experience almost as good as life.

Most end users can only run pre-recorded sims with their crowns. The sim might be programmed to allow specific limited actions or choices, but the user is fundamentally consuming a premade experience. That is exactly what most sim users want, and some of them want it too much. Legal crowns are hardwired to "sour" a sim in places to minimize the development of psychological addiction, but sim addicts have been known to acquire cracked crowns that feed them exactly the emotions they crave. Most hardcore addicts die within the first few years of abuse, usually as a consequence of personal neglect.

For professionals, however, a cranial jack and a cyberdeck's VR circuitry become the main means of interacting with a network. The heavy computing power of their hardware translates their digital surroundings into a virtual reality that matches their desired idiom. Knights and castles, neon gridwork citadels, or rainswept noir streets can all serve to translate the faceless numbers of a network into things an intruder can touch, feel, and manipulate more easily.

More importantly for operators, a cyberdeck's VR system is powerful enough to shadow an overlay of their real-life surroundings on their sensory input, allowing them to see and hear what's going on around their meatspace body as they perform their digital wizardry.



## THE DISCONNECTED WORLD

One important quality of 80's-flavored cyberpunk is that the world is not networked. There is no global consumer-level internet, no panopticon state interrogating every data transaction, and no world-wide mesh of social media platforms. The net available to the public is rigidly segmented, curated, and controlled by the megacorps, and they have no reason to let anyone speak unless they approve of what is said.

In the same fashion, there is no mass of governmental databases storing every transaction a given person may have made in the past twenty years, nor online files recording every location their cellphone has ever been registered at. Even anonymous credit chip transactions are not universally accessible and trackable by the powers of a city.

In daily life, people may use cellular phones as a concession to modern player sensibilities, but there are plenty of foundational cyberpunk books where pay phones and land lines remain the only available telephony. The existence of smartphones does not mean that there is a modern global app ecosystem to go with them; they make calls, take messages, and run what their manufacturers allow them to run.

As one might expect, there is no Wikipedia in dystopia. The only public databases available online consist of the information the megacorps want people to have, and that data can change with the weather.

At the office, ubiquitous networked workstations and wi-fi thermostats are nonexistent. Nothing is connected to the facility network that isn't a registered, secure device that absolutely must be connected. Ordinary office drones work on non-networked terminals and get data chips with any information they need for their current task... chips that can be stolen.

## A HACKER'S JOB

An operator who specializes in defeating electronic security and stealing valuable data files is most often called a **hacker**. A cranial jack and a specialized cyberdeck are the needed tools for the job, and their services are often required by operator teams. Most hackers serve three main purposes on a team.

**Hackers defeat electronic security.** They open electronic locks, blind cameras, search networks for data locations, remotely operate factory equipment, and defeat network security to steal valuable datafiles. If a corp has some valuable information on their servers, a team needs a hacker to get it out.

**Hackers falsify useful data.** If fake IDs need to be planted in a database, if video recordings need to be edited in a convenient way, or if a warrant needs to be redirected at a different target for a little while, the hacker can do it... if they can get access to the server where the information is kept.

**Hackers debilitate cybernetic enemies.** With the right programs and a close enough proximity, a hacker can jam, subvert, or even damage the cyberware of a hostile opponent. The wireless hacks they use are never long-lasting, but blinding an enemy's cybereyes for a few seconds can sometimes be all the duration a team needs.

Modern security measures mean that a hacker usually needs to be right beside their teammates in order to physically access the devices and servers they mean to subvert. It's possible to "guardian angel" a team from a remote location in some cases, but the data lines in and out a facility are usually too secure to make that a practical method. As a consequence, hacker operatives are often much more physically capable than their chair-focused corporate peers.



# CYBERSPACE, NODES, AND ACCESS

Every operator team finds it useful to have a competent hacker at their disposal. While the right console jockey can work wonders doing recon and analysis for a team before a mission, many of their most critical functions can only be performed on-site.

To work their magic, however, a hacker needs three things: a cranial jack or VR crown, a cyberdeck to connect it to, and the program utilities to carry out their desires. Without these tools, even the most talented hacker can do very little. With them and an unguarded server, digital miracles can be wrought.

## CYBERSPACE TOPOGRAPHY

Cyberspace exists as a cyberdeck-mediated virtual space coterminous with a particular network. This virtual space manifests in a particular idiom chosen by the network's owner. For example, a network architect who enjoys sword and sorcery fiction might cast their business network as an ominous cyclopean temple full of scurrying slaves, leather-clad cult guardians, and endless droning chants. While obviously artificial to jacked-in onlookers, these synthetic idioms can be quite elaborate.

Any digital intruder's cyberdeck could easily identify the temple passages as node connections, the slaves as active business programs, the guardians as Demon anti-intruder programs, and the chants as ongoing data exchange between nodes. The intruder's cyberdeck could just as easily recast this image as an environment more to the hacker's liking, but most operators prefer to leave a local idiom intact, the better to get a clue as to the target's particular psychology.

Cyberspace exists in **nodes**, each one mirroring a particular network device or cluster of devices. A single camera might be its own node, or a set of factory machines, or a net-monitored minefield, or any other network "place". Nodes are where programs and datafiles are kept and where hackers encounter guardian Demons and human watchdogs.

Nodes are linked by **connections**. To move from one node to another, a hacker needs to cross these connections, defeating any digital barriers that security may have erected. A hacker who jacks in to a security camera on the outside of a building might then hop its connection to the security panel where its output is being monitored. Without this long-distance travel, the hacker would have to physically reach the security panel in order to manipulate it.

Every human in cyberspace is represented by their **avatar**. Hackers tend to go to elaborate lengths to customize their avatars and the visual representations of the programs they use, but most corporate watchdogs are limited to corporation-approved brand icons. Most "civilian" users simply wear whatever digital disguise they've bought most recently.

## TIME IN CYBERSPACE

Cyberspace actions take the same amount of time as physical actions; the code may be fast, but the human mind is only so agile. Hackers must split their available actions between cyberspace and any physical activities they want to perform while jacked in.

## CONNECTING TO CYBERSPACE

Some virtual locations are accessible from anywhere in the city, floating in the darkness of the black net at regularly-changing digital addresses. Other virtual places are bare front ends, accessible from anywhere but containing no data of any significant importance.

Significant corporate, government, or gang networks are almost never so conveniently placed. They connect to the larger net only at secretly-set intervals, squirting data too quickly to be invaded by a remote hacker. To get at them, a hacker needs to be on-site and able to physically jack in to a network-connected device. There are two ways to do this.

- Physically attach a self-adhering field modulation cable from your cyberdeck or cranial jack to the device housing. Even without a convenient plug socket, this will let you hack the device's internals.
- Wirelessly connect to the device with your cyberdeck. The target must be within 30 meters with an unobstructed line of sight. Wireless connections are much more tenuous than physical links; you'll take a -2 penalty to any cyberspace skill checks you make and your avatar won't be able to move out of the node.

In both cases, it's assumed that you're connecting to your cyberdeck with a cranial jack. VR crowns can be used as a makeshift link for those without a cranial jack, but they apply a -1 penalty to all cyberspace skill checks made with them.

Connections last until someone yanks your cable off the device housing or you voluntarily jack out of the system. Even if unconscious, your avatar remains until you're jacked out. Crash disconnections are disorienting and will leave a hacker stunned, but sometimes an ally needs to cut the link before some watchdog boils a nerve-locked hacker's brain.

Wireless connections have no cable to yank, but fail if the target moves out of range; once the link is established, the line of sight need not be unobstructed.

Hackers normally remain aware of their physical surroundings while jacked in. They can act in either the physical or virtual realm as they choose, spending their actions during the round as they wish.

## ACCESS

While Demons and corp watchdogs can run programs with impunity on their home network, an intruder's activities have their limits. Sooner or later, the network's automatic error-detection code will defang them, making it impossible to run anything but the simplest and most superficial of programs. Their ability to forestall this is measured in points of *Access*.

**A hacker's base Access is equal to their Intelligence modifier plus their Program skill plus their cyberdeck's Bonus Access rating.** To refresh this pool, they need to spend an hour reprogramming their deck and slotting in new exploits. Such a refresh can only happen once a day as it takes time for new security holes to open in newly-updated software.

Hackers can acquire bonus Access to a network through social engineering: inside information, moles, and backdoors they've been informed about through Contacts or field work. This information is perishable, and usually becomes useless within a few weeks.

## RUNNING PROGRAMS

Once a hacker has jacked into a node, they likely want to do some mischief. This is accomplished by using *programs* made up of two different kinds of code fragments stored in their deck's Memory.

**Verbs** are what the hacker wants to do to the target: *Glitch*, *Sabotage*, *Blind*, *Decrypt*, *Delude*, or some other malfeasance. A full list of the most common Verbs is provided on page 98.

**Subjects** are what the hacker wants to do it to: *Camera*, *Turret*, *Door*, *Barrier*, *Avatar*, or something else. A hacker needs the right code libraries on hand to work their magic, and if they don't have the data specs for a target in their deck's Memory they can't hit it.

Each Verb or Subject takes up one unit of Memory in a cyberdeck. The hacker can mix and match these fragments as they wish to create programs. A deck with the *Glitch*, *Blind*, *Datafile*, *Camera*, and *Drone* fragments on it could *Glitch Drone* or *Blind Camera* or any combination of Verb and Subject the hacker wishes, determined at the time they run the program.

Verbs are flexible, but each has a limit on what type of Subjects they can use. The *Glitch* Verb is only usable on Device or Cyber types of Subjects. *Drone* is a Device Subject, so it's valid, but *Datafile* is a Data Subject, so *Glitch* can't operate on it.

**Most Verbs require that the hacker beat the target network's security difficulty with an Int/Program skill check.** This difficulty varies with the quality of the network tech, usually ranging from 7 to 12, or even more.

**Each failed execution against network security increases the network's alertness.** Each two failed attempts counts as one *Alert the Network* action, so no more than four botches will light up the facility. Opposed skill checks, such as in combat, don't trigger this effect. Even networks without a Demon active can thus end up alerted by a sufficiently inept or unfortunate hacker.

## CYBERSPACE COMBAT AND DEMONS

While only well-funded networks will have a human "watchdog" jacked in to the system to monitor it, all but the poorest network will have at least one Demon program positioned to deter intruders and raise alarms.

**Demons** are programs that usually remain stationary in a single node. When an intruder arrives, the Demon will carry out its programming. This usually entails raising a network alert to on-site security and launching *Stun Avatar* programs at the hacker. A Demon's particular program loadout and directives will depend on what the network admins granted it, as explained on page 102.

Cyberspace combat is usually played out via *Stun Avatar* programs that inflict non-lethal hit point damage to hackers or Demons hit by them. These hit points are subtracted from the actual physical hit points of the hacker; if reduced to zero HP by *Stun Avatar*, a human goes unconscious, waking up ten minutes later with one hit point. Demons reduced to zero HP are fragged, and won't reboot for another hour.

## NOTICING HACKING

A hacker generally needs to be plugged into their cyberdeck in order to hack, whether with a cranial jack or a VR crown. This is going to be enough to catch the attention of people around them, who may not know what the hacker is doing, but they'll know that the hacker is prepared to do *something*. Decks with 0 Enc might be small enough to hide discreetly, if the user is wearing a head covering.

Hacking attempts on cyberware are always obvious to the target unless specified otherwise; the user's cyberware will naturally ping the user that something is happening, even if the effect may not be obvious. Frisking someone for cyberware via hacking is generally considered a hostile act. A target might put up with it if they're being checked for weapons as part of a security process, but running a Frisk on the street is likely to convince the target that they're about to be attacked.

Hacking attempts on other hardware are obvious from within the device's node, and any hacker, watchdog, or Demon in it is capable of detecting tampering automatically. An outside observer won't necessarily notice anything wrong unless the device is behaving in some uncharacteristic way.

## WHAT CAN BE HACKED?

Software-controlled devices can be hacked, such as drones, most electronic locks, cyberware, cameras, and other program Subjects listed in this section.

Mechanical or strictly electrical devices cannot be hacked. In the default setting, this includes most vehicles, dumb locks, household appliances, thermostats, and anything else that can do its job without talking to a computer. Security-minded corps have no reason to make life any easier for an intruder than they must.

# HACKING MECHANICS

## HACKING A DEVICE OR SERVER

1. **Check your deck's CPU rating.** Do you have a free point of CPU? If not, your deck doesn't have the horsepower to run another program right now.
2. **As a Move action, take the Jack In action to connect to the device** if you aren't already connected. It's best to use the self-adhering field manipulation cable of your cyberdeck. Wireless connections are possible within 30 meters of unobstructed line-of-sight, but apply -2 to all cyberspace skill checks while connected that way. If you're connecting to your deck with a VR crown instead of a cranial jack, take an additional -1 penalty.
3. **As a Main action, run your program.** Combine a Verb and a Subject stored in your deck's Memory, pay any Access the Verb requires, and **roll Int/Program versus the target's Security difficulty**, modified by any difficulty modifiers the Verb applies. On a success, the program has its effect. On a failure, you lose any Access you spent for no benefit, the program fails to run, and you potentially alarm the network. **Every two failed skill checks against network Security count as one triggering of the Alert the Network action.**
4. **Is the program still running?** If your program self-terminates after completion, it gives back its CPU slot. If you need to keep it running to maintain its effects or control, it keeps the CPU slot until you terminate it as an Instant action, your connection is cut, or you get knocked unconscious.

| Common Security Levels                   | Difficulty |
|------------------------------------------|------------|
| Private home network                     | 7          |
| Small business or minor gang             | 8          |
| Minor government office                  | 8          |
| Corp branch office or major gang         | 9          |
| Important government facility            | 9          |
| Corp high-security network               | 10         |
| Corp or government black site            | 12         |
| Network has been alerted                 | +1         |
| The device is very important             | +1         |
| Their tech or skill is poor or makeshift | -1 to -2   |
| Their tech or skill is unusually good    | +1 to +2   |
| Hacker has inside security info          | -1 to -3   |

## HACKING CYBERWARE OR DRONES

1. **Check your deck's CPU rating.** Do you have a free point of CPU? If not, your deck doesn't have the horsepower to run another program right now.
2. **Can you reach them?** While in theory you can stick your deck's field cable on a target, in practice you're usually going to be attacking wirelessly, with a 30 meter line-of-sight range and a -2 penalty on all cyberspace skill checks. You don't have to connect to them beforehand with the *Jack In* action, however; you can launch your programs directly against the target. If you're connecting to your deck with a VR crown instead of a cranial jack, take an additional -1 penalty to all cyberspace skill checks.
3. **Do you know what cyberware you're targeting?** Cyber with a Sight obviousness rating can be recognized on sight. Otherwise, you need to either know of a cyber system's existence beforehand, run the *Frisk Cyber* program, or launch your hack blindly and hope it hits a valid target.
4. **As a Main Action, run your program**, combining the desired Verb and applicable Subject from your deck's Memory and spending the Access the Verb requires. If the target has no cyber, your effort is wasted. If the Subject you're using doesn't match any of their cyber, your effort is wasted. If the Subject you're using matches multiple systems, like the generic *Cyber* Subject, and you didn't specify which one beforehand, the GM picks a valid target randomly and tells you what you hit. Most Verbs require a skill check to successfully affect the cyber. **The base difficulty for your Int/Program skill check is equal to 7 plus one-third of the target's or the drone operator's HD or level, rounded up.** Drones without a connected operator are difficulty 8. Remember that you're probably attacking wirelessly for a -2 penalty on your skill check, plus any roll bonus or penalty the Verb you're using may apply.
5. **Is the program still running?** If your program self-terminates after completion, it gives back its CPU slot. If you need to keep it running to maintain its effects or control, it keeps the CPU slot until you terminate it as an Instant action, your target moves out of range, or you get knocked unconscious. Just moving behind cover is not enough to cut the connection; they need to get more than 30 meters away from you.



## CYBERSPACE COMBAT

1. **Be connected.** If you lose your connection, you drop out of cyberspace and can't interact with it.
2. **Be in the same network node.** All avatars or Demons involved in the fight have to be in the same network device.
3. **Both sides roll initiative.** If you're already in meatspace combat, keep your original initiative.
4. **Both sides take actions normally.** Main or Move actions spent in cyberspace are consumed in meatspace as well; you don't get two separate sets of actions. Those with the *Hacker Edge*, however, get a free Main Action each round to spend in cyberspace. Demons get the same Main and Move actions that any others do.
5. **Attacks are usually made** with the *Stun* Verb and the *Avatar* Subject, though *Kill Avatar* is used by some particularly vicious defenders. These Verbs inflict normal hit point damage on the target; at zero hit points, they fall unconscious if human or are fragged for an hour if a Demon program, though fragged demons still count for a node's maximum Demon capacity. *Kill Avatar* can inflict lethal damage and Traumatic Hits; the victim's Trauma Target is not modified by armor, but is by cyber or other sources.
6. **Combat continues** until one side flees, is disconnected, or otherwise ceases hostilities. Demons will follow their programming, while human watchdogs are more flexible. Both will likely put a high priority on the *Alert the Network* action, which must be performed twice to activate the network's intruder alert.

| Verbs             | Target Types Allowed | Access Cost | Skill Check Modifier | Verbs            | Target Types Allowed | Access Cost | Skill Check Modifier |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| <b>Activate</b>   | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | +1                   | <b>Hijack</b>    | Device               | 1           | -1                   |
| <b>Analyze</b>    | Device/Data          | 0*          | +1                   | <b>Kill</b>      | Avatar               | 1*          | +0                   |
| <b>Append</b>     | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   | <b>Lock</b>      | Device/Data          | 1           | +1                   |
| <b>Blind</b>      | Device/Cyber         | 1           | +0                   | <b>Paralyze</b>  | Avatar               | 1           | -1                   |
| <b>Deactivate</b> | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | +1                   | <b>Replace</b>   | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   |
| <b>Decrypt</b>    | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   | <b>Sabotage</b>  | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | -1                   |
| <b>Defend</b>     | Device/Cyber         | 0           | N/A                  | <b>Sense</b>     | Device/Cyber         | 0           | +0                   |
| <b>Delude</b>     | Device               | 1           | -1                   | <b>Siege</b>     | Device               | 1           | -1                   |
| <b>Erase</b>      | Data                 | 1*          | +1                   | <b>Silence</b>   | Avatar               | 1           | +1                   |
| <b>Frisk</b>      | Cyber                | 0*          | +1                   | <b>Stun</b>      | Avatar               | 0*          | +1                   |
| <b>Ghost</b>      | Avatar               | 1           | +0                   | <b>Terminate</b> | Program              | 1*          | +0                   |
| <b>Glitch</b>     | Device/Cyber         | 0           | +2                   | <b>Unlock</b>    | Device/Data          | 1*          | +1                   |

\*: These verbs are self-terminating, and return their CPU slot immediately after the program is run.

## MOVING IN CYBERSPACE

1. **Be connected.** Your avatar initially manifests in the network node corresponding to the device you connected to.
2. **Look for node connections.** Most connections to another node are obvious. Some may be hidden, however, and require a Main Action and a Wis/Program skill check to detect them at the security's difficulty level.
3. **Is there a barrier on the connection?** If so, you need to successfully run the *Unlock Barrier* program on it to pop it open. Once unlocked, it remains so until the *Lock Barrier* program is run.
4. **If there is no barrier** or it has been unlocked, take a Move action to move to the connecting node. Hostile Demons or watchdogs who are present get to run a free program against you as you flee.

| Subjects            | Type    | Affects...                |
|---------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| <b>Avatar</b>       | Avatar  | Avatars and Demons        |
| <b>Barrier</b>      | Data    | Node barriers             |
| <b>Camera</b>       | Device  | Audiovisual sensors       |
| <b>Cyber</b>        | Cyber   | Cyberware of any kind     |
| <b>Datafile</b>     | Data    | Files on servers          |
| <b>Door</b>         | Device  | Physical doors/barriers   |
| <b>Drone</b>        | Device  | Drones of all kinds       |
| <b>Machine</b>      | Device  | Unclassified devices      |
| <b>Program</b>      | Program | Active running program    |
| <b>Sensor</b>       | Device  | Any sensors at -1 penalty |
| <b>Transmission</b> | Data    | Radio and wifi signals    |
| <b>Turret</b>       | Device  | Automated weaponry        |

# PROGRAMS

To an ordinary corporate citizen, programs are packaged apps sold on logo-emblazoned wafers, each one carefully designed to perform its task neatly, efficiently, and with a minimum of fallible user oversight. To a hacker, programs are filthy balls of ragged code traded on food-stained memory chips that require an expert hand to compile, let alone run. Only a gut-deep familiarity with a program can give a hacker the kind of flexibility and responsiveness they need to overcome corporate security systems.

A program is made up of two parts: a **Verb** and a **Subject**. A hacker loads a selection of each into the memory of their cyberdeck, and as they need them, they pair any two to create the effects they need. While programs are flexible, they have some limitations.

**Programs can only be run from cyberspace.** If a hacker wants to blind a camera, they've got to jack into it first before they can run the *Blind* Verb with the *Camera* Subject. Programs with the *Cyber*, *Drone* or *Transmission* Subjects are an exception to this, and can be run directly to attack enemy cyberware or interact with local radio transmissions.

**Most Verbs cost a point of Access to run.** Some very subtle Verbs may function without this cost.

**Most programs require a skill check against the Subject's security difficulty.** The more sophisticated and well-hardened the target, the harder it is to hack it, with difficulties given on the table on page 94. On a failure, the action and Access is wasted. Some Verbs are harder or easier to execute than others, and may apply a modifier to this skill check roll.

**Programs take up one CPU slot while running.** A cyberdeck with a CPU rating of 4, for example, can run no more than 4 programs at a time. Some Verbs auto-terminate after performing their task, while others are ongoing, and continue to have their effect as long as the program runs.

**Programs terminate once the hacker jacks out or is knocked out.** Once the cable gets pulled or the hacker goes unconscious, any program that the hacker was running automatically ends. If they're connecting wirelessly to the target, as with programs affecting cyber or radio transmissions, their programs only terminate on unconsciousness, the *Terminate Program* Instant action, or if the target goes out of range.

Each Verb or Subject takes up one point of deck Memory, and can be combined arbitrarily to make up a program. Programs can be used as often as the user wishes, so long as they have the CPU and Access needed to run them; the same *Blind* and *Camera* elements can be used to blind three different cameras at the same time so long as the deck has at least a CPU of 3 and the hacker takes three separate actions to run the program at different targets. Swapping utility choices requires an hour of recompiling.

## ACQUIRING PROGRAMS

Getting a new Verb or Subject isn't as simple as buying it off the rack or copying it from a friend. The programs that hackers use are profoundly illicit, programmed to sneak under corporate security barriers and ignore corporate spyware requirements. Each one is a work of digital art that relies on secret corporate database taps, spoofed security certificates, and unpatched exploit lists. If such a program was simply copied, the doubled hit on those resources would instantly flag both programs as threats and ruin them for any practical use.

As such, these programs are painstakingly designed one-by-one by expert criminal codesmiths and sold and traded among the hackers of a city. The prices given on the chart for Verbs and Subjects reflect the usual fees charged for such things; any competent hacker will know where to buy them.

## WRITING PROGRAMS

Crafting a constant stream of usable Verbs and Subjects for sale is impractical for most PCs. The work requires contacts with a host of insider moles in corporate databases, criminal data launderers, and subject-field specialists in hardware security subversion.

While few hackers have the time or resources to write illicit programs as a business, most can manage to keep a few of their most important needs satisfied through their own coding prowess. A sufficiently talented hacker skill can maintain a few usable Verbs and Subjects, keeping them up-to-date and concealed from ubiquitous corporate DRM.

Writing a Verb or Subject takes at least Program-1 skill and one week, less one day per level of Program skill. Two such programs can be maintained at once per level of Program skill, so a PC with Program-2 can maintain up to four total Verbs and Subjects at once. They might choose to keep *Glitch*, *Blind*, *Cyber*, and *Camera* available this way, after a few weeks of work to write the code. Code that is abandoned in favor of a new program must be rewritten from scratch if the hacker needs it once again, as entirely new security bypasses must be researched and implemented.

Characters with the *Hacker* Edge gain eight Verbs or Subjects at the start of the game. These do not count against their programming limits and can be re-written if erased at the usual time requirements. They cannot be changed once selected, however.

Hackers can also write specialized or unique Subjects, often in preparation for a mission. If a hacker can find out the exact model of camera or electronic lock their target is using, they can write a unique Subject aimed at that specific device, gaining a +2 bonus on their skill checks to overcome its security difficulty.

## PROGRAM SUBJECTS

The Subjects listed below are the ones most often relevant to an operator. Other Subjects do exist, as do more specialized, specific utilities that aim at specific types of devices or particular models of hardware.

**Avatar:** A cyberspace avatar, whether one adopted by a hacker who's jacked into the network or a Demon program standing guard there.

**Barrier:** A network node barrier that blocks avatars from passing through a network connection.

**Camera:** Any device that transmits audiovisual information. Some defensive hardware has its own onboard camera, which is susceptible to this target, while others rely on a separate device's input.

**Cyber:** A cybernetic system in a visible subject within 30 meters with no significant obstacles to line of sight. Unlike most Subjects, it's not necessary for a hacker to manifest an avatar inside the target node to affect cyber systems; they can launch their program directly at it, and the system itself need not be visible on the target's body. Given the difficulty of affecting cyber wirelessly, many hackers prefer to use more specific Subjects for a +1 bonus, such as *Nerve Cyber* or *Limb Cyber*.

**Datafile:** A datafile stored within a cyberspace location. While individual files may have very little actual data in them, the autoencryption functions and anti-tamper code they're wrapped in almost always take up a full unit of Memory per file.

**Door:** A physical door, shutter, hatch, or other barrier with an electronic lock or opening mechanism.

**Drone:** A remote-controlled drone. The base difficulty is equal to 7 plus the operator's level or HD/3, rounded up, or 8 if it's not actively controlled. Like the *Cyber* Subject, it is not necessary to manifest in a drone's node to hack it wirelessly.

**Machine:** Security panels, factory machinery, electronic minefields, or any other hackable device not covered under an existing Subject. Its generality applies a +1 penalty to the security difficulty.

**Program:** A hostile program, used most often with the *Terminate* verb to end the effects of an enemy hacker's programs prematurely.

**Sensor:** Similar to the *Camera* element, this code block handles sensors of any kind, regardless of what they are intended to detect. The generality of the element decreases its efficiency, however, and it applies a +1 security difficulty penalty.

| Subject             | Cost    | Subject Type |
|---------------------|---------|--------------|
| Avatar              | \$500   | Avatar       |
| Barrier             | \$1,000 | Data         |
| Camera              | \$500   | Device       |
| Cyber               | \$1,000 | Cyber        |
| Datafile            | \$500   | Data         |
| Door                | \$500   | Device       |
| Drone               | \$1,000 | Device       |
| Machine             | \$500   | Device       |
| Program             | \$500   | Program      |
| Sensor              | \$500   | Device       |
| Transmission        | \$1,000 | Data         |
| Turret              | \$1,000 | Device       |
| Specialized Subject | x2      | -            |
| Unique Subject      | x4      | -            |

**Transmission:** Ambient radio transmissions can be affected with this element, most often for the purpose of tampering with local comms. A hacker need not be jacked into a cyberspace node to target local radio transmissions, but the usual -2 check penalty for wireless hacking applies.

**Turret:** A security turret, emplaced gun, or other fixed automated weapon.

## SPECIALIZED SUBJECTS

The Subject elements for sale in most underworld circles are intentionally generic in nature. They're packed with basic intrusion profiles for dozens or hundreds of different targets of that type, with a host of generic exploits and cracks stored in their database. Even if the specific target model isn't on their list, there are enough generic resources to give the hacker a chance.

A specialized Subject is more focused, however. Instead of being a *Cyber* Subject, for example, it might be a *Nerve Cyber* Subject. These specialized Subjects are useless against more generic systems, but against their specific target, they grant a +1 bonus to any skill checks the program may require. Thus, the *Nerve Cyber* Subject would be worthless against a cyberleg, but could affect an *Enhanced Reflexes I* system.

A unique Subject is focused on a single system, device model, or specific make of target. Instead of being a *Nerve Cyber* Subject, it might be an *Enhanced Reflexes I* Subject, or instead of a *Flying Drone* Target, it might be a *Xiaowen Phoenix* Subject. It's useless against anything but that specific target, but grants a +2 bonus to any relevant skill checks.

Specialized Subjects are sometimes available on the black market. Unique Subjects are almost never to be found for casual purchase, and either require hand-development by the hacker who might need them or a specific Contact who can get them.



## PROGRAM VERBS

The Verbs listed here are simply the most common ones available on the black market. Specialized alternatives do exist to produce non-standard effects in their targets, but these bespoke Verbs are usually custom-coded by those who need them.

Verbs are listed with the valid Subject types they function against. A Verb cannot be run with an invalid target; you can't *Blind* a data file or *Delude* an avatar.

**Activate:** Turn a device or piece of cyberware on. You can't control it or direct its function, but if it's programmed to do something when activated, such as grant a bonus action in exchange for System Strain, it does it for one round or one action. The spasmodic activation of cyber outside of the wearer's turn is unlikely to do anything useful, but it eats System Strain as usual if relevant.

**Analyze:** Identify the specific functionality of a device or the general topics of local datafiles. Hackers get a general idea of what kind of device a cyberspace node represents, but *Analyze* is needed to give specific details of where a device is in reality.

**Append:** Add a new entry or new data into a file. These new entries can't overwrite or erase any existing data, however.

**Blind:** Deactivate a device's sensory input or make cyberware temporarily unable to get any input from anything but the wearer's nervous system. Cybereyes are blind, cameras sense nothing, and laser tripwires don't register the beam. Blind characters can't effectively attack at range, their movement rate is halved, and they suffer a -4 penalty to both AC and melee hit rolls.

**Deactivate:** Turn a device or piece of cyberware off. Most devices and cyber can be rebooted by the network or the user, but it'll take a Main Action and a round to do so. If a network alert hasn't been issued, the network may not notice a deactivated device until someone spots the problem.

**Decrypt:** Decrypt a data file or radio transmission. This is often automatic for civilian encoding, though some files take Int/Program checks.

| Verb                                                                                                 | Cost    | Target Types Allowed | Access Cost | Skill Check Modifier | Use                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Activate                                                                                             | \$1,000 | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | +1                   | Turn on a device or piece of cyberware      |
| Analyze                                                                                              | \$500   | Device/Data          | 0*          | +1                   | Identify a target device or a file's topic  |
| Append                                                                                               | \$500   | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   | Add a new entry or data into a file         |
| Blind                                                                                                | \$2,000 | Device/Cyber         | 1           | +0                   | Turn off sensory input to a device or cyber |
| Deactivate                                                                                           | \$2,000 | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | +1                   | Turn off the target for at least a round    |
| Decrypt                                                                                              | \$1,000 | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   | Decrypt a file or radio transmission        |
| Defend                                                                                               | \$1,000 | Device/Cyber         | 0           | N/A                  | Shield a friendly device or cyber system    |
| Delude                                                                                               | \$5,000 | Device               | 1           | -1                   | Spoof a device with false sensor input      |
| Erase                                                                                                | \$500   | Data                 | 1*          | +1                   | Erase a data file and corrupt backups       |
| Frisk                                                                                                | \$500   | Cyber                | 0*          | +1                   | Get a list of a target person's cyberware   |
| Ghost                                                                                                | \$2,000 | Avatar               | 1           | +0                   | Turn "invisible" so long as you only move   |
| Glitch                                                                                               | \$1,000 | Device/Cyber         | 0           | +2                   | Briefly deactivate a device or cyber        |
| Hijack                                                                                               | \$5,000 | Device               | 1           | -1                   | Take remote control of a device             |
| Kill                                                                                                 | \$5,000 | Avatar               | 1*          | +0                   | Inflict lethal feedback on a human avatar   |
| Lock                                                                                                 | \$1,000 | Device/Data          | 1           | +1                   | Lock an electronic lock or node barrier     |
| Paralyze                                                                                             | \$2,000 | Avatar               | 1           | -1                   | Paralyze an avatar's owner via network      |
| Replace                                                                                              | \$1,000 | Data                 | 1*          | +0                   | Change file data to something else          |
| Sabotage                                                                                             | \$2,000 | Device/Cyber         | 1*          | -1                   | Make the target damage itself               |
| Sense                                                                                                | \$1,000 | Device/Cyber         | 0           | +0                   | Piggyback on a sensor feed or cyber         |
| Siege                                                                                                | \$2,500 | Device               | 1           | -2                   | Cut off a device's node from the network    |
| Silence                                                                                              | \$1,000 | Avatar               | 1           | +1                   | Lock out the Send Message action            |
| Stun                                                                                                 | \$1,000 | Avatar               | 0*          | +1                   | Inflict non-lethal damage on an avatar      |
| Terminate                                                                                            | \$500   | Program              | 1*          | +0                   | Forcibly end an unwanted program            |
| Unlock                                                                                               | \$500   | Device/Data          | 1*          | +1                   | Unlock an electric lock or node barrier     |
| *: These verbs are self-terminating, and return their CPU slot immediately after the program is run. |         |                      |             |                      |                                             |

**Defend:** A special Verb that can only be targeted at a friendly device or allied cyberware user within range, and costs no Access to use. While the program remains running, any hostile hacking attempts aimed at that device or any of the target's cyber systems must first beat the user in an opposed Int/Program skill check before they can attempt their hack. This Verb cannot negate programs that are already running on the target.

**Delude:** Spoof a device with false sensor input. A camera can be made to record nonexistent scenes, a minefield can be made to see phantom intrusions, a drone can feed the operator false visuals, and a turret can be made to mistake friends for foes. This Verb can't control a device directly, however, and must rely on feeding it false sensor data.

**Erase:** Erase a data file. This Verb is extremely thorough, and any on-site backups can be expected to be nuked as well, either immediately or as soon as the automatic backup protocols expose them.

**Frisk:** A *Frisk Cyber* program can give a list of all the cyber implanted in a specific human target within 30 meters, assuming the hacker's skill check beats the cyber user's security difficulty.

**Ghost:** Renders the targeted friendly avatar or Demon "invisible" until they take some cyberspace action other than *Move Nodes*. Observers in a node get an automatic opposed Int/Program check to detect a ghosted avatar's presence, ending the program.

**Glitch:** Temporarily deactivate a device or cyberware system while the program remains running, for no more than one round per Program skill level plus two. A device can be targeted by a particular hacker's *Glitch* only once a day, successful or not.

**Hijack:** Seize control of a device, operating it as you wish within the limits of its functionality for as long as the program remains running. One command is free with the program's successful execution; others take a Main Action to issue.

**Kill:** Through forced autonomic feedback and out-of-bounds electrical current parameters, inflict lethal damage to an enemy avatar equal to 1d10 per Program skill level, to a minimum of 1d10 on a successful opposed Int/Program skill check. This damage has a Trauma Die of 1d8 and a x3 Trauma Rating. The victim's Trauma Target is not modified by armor, but it is by cyber or other modifiers. Unconscious hackers cannot resist this Verb and will be instantly killed by it. This Verb has no effect on Demons.

**Lock:** Lock a physical device that has some sort of electronic locking mechanism or a currently-unlocked cyberspace node barrier.

**Paralyze:** On a successful opposed Int/Program skill check against the target, render a Demon or avatar incapable of moving out of a node or using the *Alert the Network* or *Send Message* actions while the program is running. Other cyberspace actions can be taken normally. Human hackers are also physically paralyzed while the program runs, incapable of moving in meatspace until the connection is cut or the program ends.

**Replace:** Edit a data file, changing one piece of data in it into another of the hacker's choice. It cannot erase or add data outright, only alter it.

**Sabotage:** Cause a physical device or cyberware system to damage itself through violent movement or self-destructive current surges. Devices smaller than a car will usually be disabled until repaired. Cyberware users do not take damage, but must make two Physical saves to resist the effect; if they fail both, the targeted system is disabled until the next maintenance, and if they fail one, it's frozen for one round. A device or cyber can be targeted by this Verb only once per scene.

**Sense:** Piggyback on the sensory feed of a device or piece of cyber. Anything the device senses or records, the hacker can sense. Swapping focus from cyberspace to reality is an On Turn action.

**Siege:** If a Device is successfully *Sieged*, its network connections are severed for everyone but the hacker, blocking transit, data, or drone control. Defenders can run *Terminate Program* against it from any adjacent node.

**Silence:** The affected avatar or Demon is unable to use the *Send Message* cyberspace action while this program runs. *Alert the Network* can still be done.

**Stun:** Disrupt an avatar or Demon with sensory glitching, non-lethal current surges, and code corruption. Make an Int/Program skill check; beat an opposed Int/Program check for a human target, or a static 8+skill bonus target for a Demon. The target takes 1d10 non-lethal damage per Program level, to a minimum of 1d10.

**Terminate:** Prematurely end an undesired program. Any damage or changes the program already inflicted are unaffected.

**Unlock:** Unlock a physical device with an electronic lock or a network's cyberspace node barrier.



## CYBERSPACE ACTIONS

Cyberspace actions take the same amount of time as meat-space actions. Thus, if the PC takes a Main Action to run a program in cyberspace, they can't then use that same Main Action to fire a weapon in reality, as the hacker needs to split their available action pool over both realms of being. The following actions are among the most common, but others may be allowed at the GM's discretion.

### NETWORK ACTIONS

#### Alert the Network

#### Main

An action normally only taken by Demons and human watchdog hackers, this action will alert the whole network that there's an intruder present in this particular cyberspace node. This action must be taken twice to trigger an alert; one Demon could use it on two different rounds or two Demons could both use it the same round. Up to an hour can elapse between the two uses of this action; if a defeated Demon still gets it off once, another enemy three nodes later can still complete the alert with their own action. These alerts usually are automatically messaged to at least some physical security staff.

#### Jack In

#### Move

Attach a cyberdeck's field manipulation cable to a device or initiate a wireless connection to a device within 30 meters with no significant obstacles to the user's line of sight. The hacker's avatar appears in the cyberspace node associated with the target device.

#### Jack Out

#### Move

Safely disconnect a wireless connection or remove a cyberdeck's field manipulation cable. Hostile assailants can do this with no real chance of failure if within melee range. If someone forcibly yanks a physical cable loose while a hacker is jacked in, the hacker is stunned and loses their next Main Action.

#### Move Nodes

#### Move

Assuming there's no barrier between the hacker's current network node and an adjacent one, they can move one hop on the network. If they're being engaged by an enemy Demon or human attacker, however, their foe may choose to run one program against them as a parting shot before they can complete the move.

#### Send Message

#### On Turn

Send a brief message over the network to an avatar or device in a connected node, provided no barriers obstruct the path. Demons, watchdogs, and others with admin privileges can message any known avatar or device on the network regardless of active barriers.

#### Crash Shutdown

#### Main

This action can only be taken by someone with admin privileges, usually the senior human watchdog hacker on duty for a given network. Once triggered, the entire network will shut down in 1d4+4 minutes, deactivating every connected device and booting every user out of the system as if forcibly disconnected. It will take 24 hours to bring the system back up and inflict 10% of the network's total hardware costs in component damage. Corps reserve this action for dire emergencies, when it seems certain that a cyberspace intruder is soon to do something even worse than this. Impending shutdowns are obvious to everyone in the system.

### CYBERDECK ACTIONS

#### Copy File

#### Main

Make a copy of a datafile located in your current node and store it in your deck's Memory. The inevitable wrapper of anti-tamper code and log files makes almost all important datafiles take up one point of Memory, however small the actual contents.

#### Delete Local File

#### Move

Erase one datafile, Verb, or Subject on your own cyberdeck, freeing up the Memory it occupied. Deleting files in a server node you don't have admin rights for requires the *Erase* Verb, as the local network may not permit such tampering.

#### Issue Command

#### Main

Verbs such as *Hijack* or *Delude* seize control of devices or provide some lasting influence over a system. Ordering a controlled target to do something takes a Main Action. A controlled but uncommanded target will continue doing whatever it was last told to do. If that's impossible or impractical, it will do nothing until it gets a new command.

#### Run A Program

#### Main

Run a program from the hacker's cyberdeck or the watchdog's server, combining a Verb with a Target to produce a desired effect.

#### Terminate a Program

#### Instant

Shut down a program the hacker is running, freeing up CPU capacity. Programs are automatically terminated if the hacker gets dumped from the network, their wireless signal is blocked, or they're otherwise cut off from their intended targets.



## AN EXAMPLE OF HACKING

The novice operator Bobby Wires and his friends are trying to get inside an abandoned factory currently being used as the headquarters of the Iron Tigers. The site is crawling with gangers, and the operators have no intention of drawing undue notice.

After a discreet reconnaissance around the factory, the team spots an open loading dock. Unfortunately, there's a camera pointed directly at it, probably feeding its output to a security board inside the factory. The team can't afford to draw attention by shooting it out.

Fortunately, Bobby's fairly well-equipped to deal with the situation. He's got a cranial jack, a homemade scrap deck, and the *Glitch, Camera, Stun, Avatar, Unlock, Door, Machine*, and *Sense* program fragments loaded into its Memory. His current Access pool for the job is 3, counting his Intelligence mod, his Program skill, and his scrap deck's bonus Access.

The hacker slides across the street and drifts up to within 30 meters of the camera, keeping in its blind spot. Once he's in range, he jacks into it wirelessly with the *Jack In* Move action.

His senses are immediately assaulted by the low-rez metallic jungle that suddenly surrounds him, the Iron Tigers having made a few desultory edits of an off-the-shelf cyberspace idiom. His deck informs him that the bug-eyed monkey perched in the copper palm tree beside him represents the camera's controls.

A quick glance around shows a trail leading off into the jungle; that must be the network connection that eventually hooks the camera to a security panel. Another look around shows no sign of Demons, so Bobby can take his time glitching out the camera.

To do so, he spends his Main Action running *Glitch Camera* on the monkey. *Glitch* has no Access cost, but he still has to roll against the local security difficulty of 8. His Int/Program skill check is penalized -2 for the wireless connection, but gets +2 for *Glitch's* modifier. He rolls a 9 and succeeds. His meat body quickly waves the team in; they've got 3 rounds to get inside the factory before the camera comes back online.

Bobby feels good about his efforts, and is getting a little cocky. His next round, he scrambles up on a stack of crates and slaps his cyberdeck's field manipulation cable directly to the camera. Now that he's physically connected to it, his avatar can leave the node and travel down that connection to wherever it might lead. His

teammates gesture frantically at him to get inside, but Bobby's confident that he's got this.

The next round, Bobby takes a *Move Nodes* action to transit to the connected node. The idiom flickers and shifts into a mirror-bright pool of water surrounded by greenery; his deck identifies it as a security panel. Now all he needs to do is run *Sense Machine* on the panel, and he'll be able to quickly look over every area of the factory that any connected camera is watching.

Just as he contemplates that, the metallic snarl of a steel panther rasps above him. His deck informs him that it's a Mastiff-class Demon and it's programmed to attack intruders.

Bobby and the panther both roll Initiative, 1d8+1 for him and 1d8 for the panther. The panther wins, and executes a *Stun Avatar* program against Bobby. Both roll opposed Int/Program skill checks; 2d6+2 for Bobby, and 2d6+2 for the panther. Fortunately, Bobby's physically connected to the network, or else he'd take a further -2 penalty for being wireless. The panther wins anyway, but Bobby triggers his *Masterful Expertise* Edge to roll again, winning the second roll and avoiding damage.

Bobby has one round left of the camera being blind and his meat body is standing right next to it. If he jacks out now, he gets away from the Demon, but it's probably programmed to do a network alert as soon as it's repelled an intruder. Things are looking grim.

Luckily, Bobby has the *Hacker* Edge, which means he gets a bonus Main Action each round in cyberspace. He spends the first one running *Stun Avatar* against the Demon; he rolls his Int/Program against a flat difficulty of 8 plus the panther's +2 skill bonus; he rolls an 11 and wins, inflicting 8 points of damage, de-rezzing the panther. He spends the second one running *Glitch Machine* against the security panel, succeeding on the difficulty 8 check to shut it down for three rounds. The camera he's standing next to comes back on line, but the security panel it's reporting to is dead for 18 seconds, during which Bobby hastily rushes to join his teammates.

Meanwhile, the ganger at the security board curses and slaps the side of the machine as the inputs cut out. By the time he's dug out the dog-eared manual for the antique iron, it's flickered back to life. Shrugging, he goes back to his drink as the operators skulk deeper into the factory's concrete depths...



# DEMONS AND WATCHDOGS

Corporate systems almost always have some sort of active defenses. Without a vigilant Demon or two in the system to alert security guards, occupants of a facility might never realize that their network is under attack. In the same fashion, human watchdog hackers are often plugged into the more important networks, maintaining a 24/7 human presence within it.

## DEMONS

Demons are autonomous programs supported by a network's server hardware. Demons have avatars much as human hackers do, but operate based on a list of prioritized command lines, carrying out their duties according to their programmed behavior.

Demons are smart enough to prioritize commands intelligently; they won't try to perform an obviously-impossible task in preference to an action that actually is possible. They are not intelligent, however, and can't make choices unrelated to their program.

Demon programming is expressed in **command lines**, each line representing one action or purpose. Demons prioritize their command list from top to bottom, skipping commands that aren't applicable. Every demon has a limit in the number of command lines they can process. Lists more lengthy than this are too complicated for the program's logic to handle effectively.

Demon programs can use the Verbs and Subjects loaded into the network server they are operating on.

Demons have hit points which are depleted by the *Stun Avatar* program or other effects that damage code integrity. When HP reach zero, the Demon is fragged, and can do nothing until it reboots itself in an hour. It still counts for maximum-demons-per-node, however.

Demons also have a skill bonus. This bonus is applied to any cyberspace-related skill checks they may need to make, and counts as their skill level for the damage done by *Stun* or *Kill Avatar*.

## DEMONS IN A NETWORK

Demons are located in a network based on the owner's preferences. Sensitive nodes are often guarded by a Demon, as are network chokepoints. Some Demons are set to patrol the network, either in a regular pattern or as a random walk through connected nodes. Demons can ignore network barriers and do not need to spend Access to run programs, as they are assumed to have admin privileges.

A given network can support only so many Demons, based on the power of the network server. The network server lists both the maximum number of Demons that the network can support and the maximum number of Demons that can effectively act in the same node. If more than this number of Demons are crowded into the same node, the newest arrivals can do nothing but *Move Nodes*.

| Demon      | Cost      | Lines | HP | Skill |
|------------|-----------|-------|----|-------|
| Tripwire   | \$5,000   | 2     | 3  | +1    |
| Mastiff    | \$10,000  | 4     | 5  | +2    |
| Siren      | \$15,000  | 2     | 8  | +3    |
| Cataphract | \$25,000  | 3     | 20 | +3    |
| Ogre       | \$50,000  | 4     | 25 | +2    |
| Headsmen   | \$100,000 | 4     | 30 | +3    |
| Hydra      | \$200,000 | 7     | 40 | +4    |
| Nemesis    | \$500,000 | 5     | 50 | +5    |

## WATCHDOGS

Demons are tireless, vigilant, and require no wages. Human hackers, despite being deficient in these regards, are substantially more flexible and intelligent. Watchdog hackers are usually hired in 24/7 shifts in order to maintain round-the-clock observation of important networks that can afford their considerable expense, though some poorer facilities hire them only during working hours.

Watchdogs use the same hacking rules as PCs do, albeit they can ignore network barriers and do not need to pay Access to run their programs. To avoid a single point of failure, the vast majority use personal cyberdecks and their own programs rather than relying on the facility's server computing power.

As watchdogs are intelligent, they can and will maintain full communications with the facility's physical security staff. PCs who alert them to their presence can expect local security to come running to the physical location of any compromised device nodes.

Below are statistics for some of the common types of watchdogs encountered by PC hackers. Minor corps or gangs might be able to hire only minimally-competent hackers, but major black sites and important corporate facilities will have the best talent money can buy, with hacking cyber and decks to match.

### Common Corp Watchdog Types

| Watchdog            | Program Skill Level | Int Mod | Salary Per Month |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------|------------------|
| Code Drone (1 HD)   | 0                   | +1      | \$2,000          |
| Veteran Tech (2 HD) | 1                   | +1      | \$5,000          |
| Talented Pro (4 HD) | 2                   | +1      | \$10,000         |
| Big Name (6 HD)     | 3                   | +2      | \$50,000         |
| Dire Legend (9 HD)  | 4                   | +2      | N/A              |

# COMMON DEMON PROGRAMMING

The command list below covers some of the most common command lines used in programming Demons. They can be used as general examples for creating new lines at the GM's discretion.

## Bouncer

Run *Stun Avatar* against any intruders until they have been knocked unconscious or offline.

Perform the *Alert the Network* action when an intruder has been repelled, if it isn't already alerted.

## Patroller

Perform the *Alert the Network* action when an intruder is sighted, if it isn't already alerted.

Move through the network in a specific patrol or random wander.

Pursue intruders through the network, choosing randomly if multiple intruders are encountered.

Run *Stun Avatar* against any intruders until they have been knocked unconscious or offline.

## Gatekeeper

Reserve a Main Action to run *Lock Barrier* on a local barrier in response to any attempt to unlock it.

Message security with the *Send Message* action whenever you execute a line action in response to some anomaly.

## Shieldbearer

Perform the *Alert the Network* action when an intruder is sighted, if it isn't already alerted.

Reserve a Main Action to run *Defend Device* in response to any attempts to hack devices in the node you're in.

## Common Command Lines

Perform the *Alert the Network* action when an intruder is sighted, if it isn't already alerted.

Reboot deactivated devices on the node and message any watchdogs who may be on duty.

Run *Stun Avatar* against any intruders until they have been knocked unconscious or offline.

Run *Lock Barrier* on an unlocked node barriers you encounter and message any watchdogs who may be on duty.

Move through the network in a specific patrol or random wander.

Run *Kill Avatar* against any unconscious intruders until they are dead.

Pursue intruders through the network, choosing randomly if multiple intruders are encountered.

Run *Erase Program* against an intruder's *Stun Verb* if they have used it in your presence before.

Run *Terminate Program* against any active Hijack programs currently running in your presence.

Run *Paralyze Avatar* against an intruder to physically lock them down before further countermeasures.

Message security with the *Send Message* action whenever you execute a line action in response to some anomaly.

Reserve a Main Action to run *Defend Device* in response to any attempts to hack devices in the node you're in.

The pre-made command lists show examples of some of the usual behaviors observed in corporate Demons. Individual facilities may have programs that vary substantially from these.

## Repairman

Perform the *Alert the Network* action when an intruder is sighted, if it isn't already alerted.

Move through the network in a specific patrol or random wander.

Reboot deactivated devices on the node and message any watchdogs who may be on duty.

## Trapper

Pursue intruders through the network, choosing randomly if multiple intruders are encountered.

Message security with the *Send Message* action describing what the intruder you're following is currently doing.

Run *Paralyze Avatar* against an intruder to physically lock them down before further countermeasures.

## Executioner

Run *Paralyze Avatar* against an intruder to physically lock them down before further countermeasures.

Run *Stun Avatar* against any intruders until they have been knocked unconscious or offline.

Run *Kill Avatar* against any unconscious intruders until they are dead.

Message security with the *Send Message* action whenever you execute a line action in response to some anomaly.





# NETWORK SERVERS AND ARCHITECTURE

If there are hackers, there must be something to hack. This section explains the steps for creating a network. GMs should use these guidelines after mapping out the physical location as explained on page 169; until you know where the cameras and doors are in your facility, you won't be able to create their cyberspace reflections.

## PREPARE THE MAP

Take a copy of your facility map. Draw a colored circle around every device or device group that the PCs could conceivably hack. Doors, cameras, servers, security panels, databanks, industrial machinery, or anything else that might be digitally pillaged.

When you're done, you'll have a map with numerous circles drawn. You'll connect these together after you choose a server to power your network.

## PICK A SERVER

The server classes listed here are some of the most common, and a corporation can be relied upon to use the smallest iron they can get away with. There can only be one primary server on a single network; others might be connected to it, but only the primary server counts for determining node connection limits, barriers, or active demons.

**Servers have node connection limits.** This is the maximum number of nodes that can be connected to the server. If you want to connect 4 cameras, 3 doors, a security panel, and the server itself, you need to have at least 9 connections available.

Hackable devices without a connection to the server can't communicate with it, but still function normally. An electronically-locked door with no connection can still be hacked, and PCs can still jack in to its cyberspace node, but there's no way for the server to monitor the door or control its status.

**Servers have barrier limits.** This is the maximum number of barriers that the network can support. Barriers can be bidirectional or only work one-way as the network architect desires.

**Servers have Demon limits.** A given server can only support so many Demons, and only so many of those can be active in one node at a time. The table adjacent lists both maximum total Demons and, parenthetically, how many can act in one node at a time.

**Servers have effectively unlimited Memory.** Even the smallest, simplest server can contain as many Verbs, Subjects, or datafiles as a user needs. Any Demons supported by the server can use its Verbs and Subjects. As a result, prudent network architects try to keep invading hackers out of the primary server node; a well placed *Erase Datafile* execution can erase critical Verbs from the server and defang the network's Demons. Human watchdogs use their own cyberdecks, so are not subject to this risk.

| Server Class | Cost     | Max Nodes | Max Barriers | Max Demons |
|--------------|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Databank     | \$2,000  | 0         | 0            | 0          |
| Alpha        | \$10,000 | 10        | 1            | 2 (1)      |
| Beta         | \$50,000 | 15        | 2            | 3 (2)      |
| Gamma        | \$100K   | 20        | 4            | 5 (2)      |
| Delta        | \$500K   | 25        | 6            | 8 (2)      |
| Epsilon      | \$1M     | 30        | 10           | 12 (3)     |

## DRAW NETWORK CONNECTIONS

With the server's maximum connection limit in mind, draw lines on the map between connected nodes. You probably want to make sure that cameras and important security doors are hooked up to a security panel that is presumably being monitored by a human guard, and turrets and other hardware that rely on external sensors should be connected to those sensors.

If you have a high-security site, you probably have multiple servers with multiple layers of defense. An outdoor camera should not be able to connect to a black site's research server; the outer shell of security should be running on its own network.

## PLACE BARRIERS AND DEMONS

Mark a perpendicular line through those connections that are shielded by barriers. Particularly important network chokepoints or the access connection to the primary server are favorite places for these. Many have a Demon posted as a guard on one or both sides.

Put Demons into important nodes, up to the limit that the server can support. Many networks have fewer than the maximum, as Demons are expensive and require regular code maintenance.

For quick-and-easy placement, just choose a Demon type and a programming bundle and note it down. Thus, you might see a "Tripwire/Bouncer" marked, or "Mastiff/Patroller". If the Demon moves through the network, note its patrol route, or randomly pick the node it's currently in when the PCs first hack in.

## PLACE DATAFILES

Note the location of valuable datafiles generated as part of the mission's objectives or rewards. Some may be kept on the primary server, but for security reasons and practical convenience, most will be kept in separate databanks or user terminals.

## SET A SECURITY DIFFICULTY

Finally, set an appropriate base security difficulty for the network using the table on page 94. Individual networks or nodes might vary from this based on their importance or the skills of their maintainers.

## AN EXAMPLE NETWORK

The GM needs to set up a network for his next session. He's got an abandoned factory that's being occupied by tech-savvy gangers who have repurposed the tech for drug production, and he's already sketched out a map of the site. Because there's a hacker PC, he knows that the network is likely to become pertinent.

He starts by taking a copy of the map and circling anything obviously hackable: the electronically-locked main entry door, the rear exit, the two big loading doors on the factory floor, the door to the gang leader's private quarters, and three cameras that are positioned to watch the exterior doors.

Looking at these potential nodes, he scratches off the big loading doors. If the gangers need a network to tell them when a 4 by 6 meter door is open, they're nodding too hard to do anything about it anyway. He also marks off the front entrance, because there should be enough people moving through it or near it to notice intruders.

These doors still have locks, and they still have loud audio alarms on them that will trigger if a tampering effort fails. A hacker can still patch into them, occupy their nodes, and use their cyberdeck commands to force it to unlock. They're just isolated nodes, cut off from the rest of the network. As such, their status and activities can't be monitored remotely.

That leaves three cameras, the rear door, and the door to the gang leader's den. The GM adds a security panel so that some bored ganger can be made to sit and watch the camera feeds. Adding the server, that makes a total of seven nodes on the system.

Looking at the available servers, the GM decides an Alpha-class server will be fine, as it can connect up to 10 nodes. Consulting the example system difficulties on page 94, he decides the base difficulty to hack on the system is 8, for a minor gang, +1 for being technically skilled, for a total of 9. The main server itself and the security panel will be difficulty 10, thanks to a +1 for being important nodes. The server will be physically located in the boss' private rooms, because a hacker who can get his hands on it directly can bypass the whole rest of the system.

The GM draws a single line connecting the rear door to the three cameras, then to the security panel. Then he draws a separate line connecting the gang boss' door to the panel, then a line from the panel to the server. This way, an intruder hacking in through an exterior camera will have to get through the security panel in order to hack the gang boss' door.

An Alpha server can only support two demons, and each node in an Alpha network can only have one demon in it at a time. The GM places a Mastiff with a Patroller set of instructions to roam the network, and a Siren with the Gatekeeper instructions to stand guard in the security panel and keep intruders from getting at the server. An Alpha can support a single barrier, so he puts it between the security panel and the server.

Finally, the GM puts three payday files on the main server, putting a chunk of the extra mission rewards determined with the guidelines on page 176 into each of the files. The PCs might never try to hack the main server, but there's money in it if they do.

## DEVICES, WORK TERMINALS, AND NETWORK CONNECTIONS

A GM may wonder where ubiquitous home and commercial network devices can be found in this plan. Today, a host of appliances, thermostats, fire alarms, televisions, and other minor devices are woven into the average building's local network. Where do these devices figure in to a corp facility's network?

They don't. Any technician who connected a thermostat to a facility's main network would be very lucky to be fired. More likely, he would be ushered to an interrogation room, grilled for the person who bribed him to put in such a gaping security hole, and then fed into the nearest incinerator.

Absolutely nothing in a secure site is connected to the main network except for verified, certified devices capable of integrating with the server's security systems. That's the whole point of a server's node limit; beyond that many devices, the server just can't reasonably maintain security against hostile intruders.

Some facility-wide services are kept on their own dedicated networks. A mesh of fire alarms or loudspeakers may be separately wired in with no connection to the main server. If there's no server to provide security services to such a network, a hacker could do as they wished with the connected nodes; no server means no Demons and no base difficulty for running programs in a node.

More often, these services are either connected to the main network or left totally isolated. A fire alarm may trigger a siren when it detects smoke or heat, but it's up to the nearest employees to actually hear it and do something about it. A thermostat may be electromechanically connected to the building's furnace, with any attempt to "hack" it owing more to Fix than Program.

This isolation extends to worker terminals. If they're working on sensitive data, it's on a registered, secure terminal. Nothing touches the site network that isn't locked down and monitored.



# CREATING YOUR DYSTOPIA

Some GMs intend to use an existing setting for their game, repurposing a ready-made world for their own campaign. Existing cyberpunk games, popular works of genre fiction, or engaging movies and television shows can provide convenient backdrops for your adventures. If you already know what kind of setting you want to play in, you can go directly to page 142 and start building adventures for your game.

Other GMs aren't quite so committed to an existing setting. You may want to fashion your own grim dystopia or put your own personal spin on an existing fictional world. This section of the book discusses the necessary steps for creating your own cyberpunk setting and how to build the necessary hooks and contexts for creating fun adventures for your group.

The procedures that follow are not the only way to create a world. They may not even be the best way for your particular creative inclinations. As such, you should feel free to remix, edit, and shuffle things around as your own personal creativity recommends. These tools are meant to bolster your own inventive forces rather than act as a substitute or straitjacket.

## PRINCIPLES OF CREATION

*Cities Without Number* is built to be a sandbox game, and the GM who would be a world's demiurge needs to understand some basic sandbox principles if they're going to get through the process successfully. It's relatively easy to describe a sandbox campaign, but the tricks and guidelines a GM needs to mind in order to build one successfully aren't always intuitive.

Note that these guidelines are written on the assumption that you actually will be *running* the game as a sandbox. This style is not for every group of players, and there are good reasons for story-driven adventure arcs being so popular in the modern RPG market. Even so, it's important that you understand the assumptions that inform the tools in this book, even if you don't mean to use them as they were originally intended.

**Sandbox games are driven by the players.** A GM has an important role in cooking up opportunities that fit the PC goals and refereeing the consequences of their choices and activities, but a sandbox is fundamentally driven by player choices. They decide what they want from the world and they decide what means they'll use to get it.

This means that your content creation has to be focused around player interests and activities. You care about what the players are doing right now and what they'll need for the next session. You don't care about what's going on outside that sphere. If you have leftover creative energy after supporting the PC's current plans, you can use it to decorate the rest of the world, but that's not your primary concern.

**The plot of a sandbox campaign is what happens.** Put thoughts of storylines, narratives, and character beats far from your mind. It's not your job to deliver a story, it's your job to give the PCs a plausible, reactive, opportunity-filled world in which to enact their desires. Maybe their efforts will result in a stirring chrome epic of challenges overcome, and maybe it'll end with the party's corpses stuffed into a corporate crematorium. The outcome is not your problem.

It is your problem to give them opportunities and situations that are interesting and worth their engagement. You don't have to promise them success, but you need to give them hooks, clients, and jobs that can get them in the direction they want to go if they are successful.

**You only need to stay one session ahead.** Whatever your creation goals, whatever the prepwork you have in mind, remember that you only ever need to be one session ahead of the players. At the end of every session, ask them what they intend to try to do next, and then create your prep content accordingly.

Don't let your urge for completionism or the need to cover every possibility lure you into doing more work than you need to do. The only content you absolutely need to have is what you need to run the very next session of your game. Everything beyond that is only for your own enjoyment.

**If you're not having fun and you don't need this content for the next session, stop it.** If you're not enjoying yourself and the content you're working on isn't something you know you'll need for your next session, you need to let it go. A sandbox GM can create a ten-volume setting bible for their world and they still won't exhaust every possible fact or detail that could be relevant in play. If you chain yourself to the worry that something *might* be needed, you'll burn yourself out before you ever complete what you *will* need.

One of the most important skills a sandbox GM can develop is the ability to stop working on unnecessary content. We all have very limited amounts of time and creative energy, and if we spend it on decorations and peripheral developments, we'll be too tired to do the work we actually need to have ready.

While the principles above can help a GM build a campaign world, actually running it for a group can sometimes present some special challenges of its own. The GM advice in the mission creation section touches on some of the more common problems a GM will encounter when introducing players to a sandbox game, and it's recommended that you read it over carefully before you launch the campaign.



## THE LEVELS OF YOUR WORLD

Once you've understood the basic principles behind a sandbox world, it's time to start chopping up your creative work into pieces you can digest.

A cyberpunk campaign setting can be broken down into three different levels that need some degree of development. You begin at the very top level and work yourself lower, using the facts and problems you've established at a higher stage to inform your choices for the lower ones.

**The world** is your top level. Contrary to what you might suspect, you don't actually have to establish much in the way of global history, international relations, or fine-grained detail about global problems and conflicts. You don't even have to firmly establish a date; plenty of engaging cyberpunk fiction is ambiguous about when exactly it's happening.

You keep the world nebulous for two main reasons: it's extremely difficult to put together a coherent global timeline of multiple interacting forces, and it's not generally anything the players care about. If a piece of global history isn't producing immediate adventure grist for you, it's not worth the energy to build it unless you're having fun with the process. Your players will care about the immediate problems and opportunities you offer them, and big-picture international situations are useful only insofar as they give you some adventure hook to hand to them.

**The city** is your middle level. While cyberpunk games sometimes venture into rural areas or wilderness zones, the vast majority are centered on a particular city or cities. Even events that occur outside the

urban sprawl tend to be *about* the city. You need a base to start your campaign, and that base almost certainly consists of a particular city you develop as a backdrop for your group's adventures.

You can pull an existing city from reality, fast-forward it a few decades, and use it as the frame for your game. You can hypothesize entirely new conurbations, conjuring up new megaplexes out of swollen, ingrown seaboard megacities. You can even fabricate cities out of whole cloth, adjusting the history of the world so that they were born and grew in place of present urban areas. Whichever you choose, you need to have a properly-built sandbox for your impending adventures.

**The district** is the bottom level of your campaign. A district could be a neighborhood, arcology, slum, back-country zone, corporate enclave, or any other sub-section of your city or its surrounds with a particular theme or cohesive identity. Districts are where adventures live, and as such they need the most careful development of the three layers of your campaign.

Districts contain the specific NPCs, factions, buildings, bases, and locations of your campaign, and they're the places the players are most likely to care about and to interact with. A single cyberpunk-style megacity can contain an almost unlimited number of districts, and there's rarely any plausibility problem with pulling a new one out of your hat whenever the PCs need a change of pace or a new type of location to deal with. You might go so far as to create a few of them during this stage of your setting's development just to inspire yourself with some different kinds of adventure opportunities.



# CYBERPUNK THEMES

There's no single list of "cyberpunk themes" that will win universal agreement. Every player has their own angle on the genre, and what one person might look for, another might just as soon ignore. Even so, there are some elements that tend to show up regularly in cyberpunk fiction and a GM can use these themes to help inform their choices when creating new material.

Whenever you need to make a decision about your world, or figure out how a particular event turned out in its past, you can consult the list below and apply some theme to your creation. If you want to emphasize treachery as a theme in your world, for example, you can make some prior disaster hinge on a sudden betrayal. If you want to play up consumerism in your city, you can insert a locally-based megacorp that sells something we currently don't think of as salable.

Cyberpunk fiction is fundamentally dystopian, and the worlds and events you create are probably going to be unhappy for most of the people involved. It's up to you how heavily you want to lean into that; you might keep a light touch with these elements for a more nuanced world, or you could peg the dials for a blackly comedic hellscape.

**Alienation:** You don't really belong to anything. Your relationships are transactional and provisional, established by your choice and because it seemed beneficial to you. Your identity is self-created and self-defined, and if you are dissatisfied and lonely it means you haven't found the right group to identify with. People who accept identities they have not personally created are ignorant and backward; loyalty to family, birth religions, nations, or ethnic groups is a sign of a dull and unreflective mind. In this world, emphasize that involuntarily imputed loyalties are considered to be something for the impoverished, the criminal, and the stupid. Corporate citizens belong to whatever the marketing campaigns tell them will bring them the most happiness.

**Commodification:** Almost everything can be bought and sold, and the corps are working on those things that are still currently beyond their reach. Health, strength, lifespan, happiness, belonging, freedom, respect... if someone wants it, somebody is trying to sell it to them. It might come in the form of a product, or it might be a subscription to a new religion or social circle, or it could be a "user fee" to avoid unfortunate consequences. Pick out a few things that you wouldn't normally imagine as being salable, and put them in as visibly commoditized products in your world.

**Consumerism:** To live is to buy. Happiness consists of buying the right products, subscribing to the right services, and paying the right fees. If you're not happy, it's because you haven't bought the right things or paid attention to the right marketing campaigns. Owning fine possessions makes you a good person, worthy of respect, success, and social belonging. In your world, emphasize the craving for possessions. Everyone's always trying to get the money for that next step up, because once they get it, they're sure to be happy... for a little while, at least.

**Dehumanization:** Marketers and idealists may talk about cyber as being a mere upward step towards a better version of yourself, but that's not how it works in this reality. The more cyber you get, the less you have in common with ordinary humanity. It may manifest in dangerously skewed emotions, the loss of certain types of "unnecessary" physical stimuli, or the simple inability to relate to creatures that are so much weaker, slower, and less intelligent than you. In your world, emphasize the way in which people with heavy cyber do not behave the way normal people do. What their cyber lets them do, they do, possibly in ways that are not acceptable to ordinary humans.

**Despair:** Things aren't going to get better. The world is hard, and it's only going to get worse for most people. Attempts to improve things are either quixotic efforts doomed to failure by their sheer idealistic impracticality or cruel facades over some sinister, selfish plot. Ordinary people don't struggle for a better life so much as they struggle to keep their existing life from falling apart. In your world, add a few hopeful plans and infrastructure efforts that failed very visibly to signpost the general spirit of hopelessness. It's all the better if their failure left the situation even worse.

**Escapism:** Everyone wants to get away from this world. Some do it with VR, others with drugs, a few with religion or cultish social groups. Many people don't honestly believe that their lives can ever really improve, or they can ever really escape the situations they find themselves living in. They turn to these transient escapes because it's all they can hope to have, so make sure your world has plenty of NPCs unhealthily interested in these respites.



**Madness:** Some people just can't live in this world but aren't ready to die. The result is insanity of some sort. Perhaps it's a fanatical devotion to a fringe cause, or a hedonistic amorality dedicated only to immediate satisfaction, or clinging to some impossible belief or actually-untrue conspiracy theory. Whatever it is, only by reconfiguring the reality around them are they able to cope with their lives, even if that reconfiguration forces them to acts of violence or criminality. Add a few lunatic social movements, religions, or political parties to your world and show how their shared madness gives relief and meaning to their adherents.

**Meat:** For all Eighties-style cyberpunk's dedication to VR avatars and digital hacking, most of the world operates on principles of tangible flesh. Robots are for industrial work, not daily labor, and automation is not something that touches common life for most people. Jobs are done by people, not apps, and for the criminal underclass that most PCs belong to, there's not much intrusion of the digital into their daily life. Slum dwellers don't typically hang out on online forums, they talk in bars and on streetcorners. The more Eighties-flavored your cyberpunk is, the less that net-based interactions are going to directly touch the ordinary, non-hacker citizenry.

**Sex:** Like every other primal human urge, sex has been packaged, commoditized, and marketed to exhaustion. Burnt-out debauchees cultivate appetites unimaginable to others, having exhausted the novelty of any lesser vices and being unrestrained by anything resembling morality. Corp-created sexual identities exist purely to serve as market segmentation. Your orientation will be discontinued and its product and media support canceled if it doesn't hit its sales targets.

GMs should be very careful about playing up this element of a setting, and get clear and explicit buy-in from the group before making it a significant element of the game. It can often be more effective to leave the details carefully ambiguous, letting the players fill in their own mental blanks without dwelling on the dystopian specifics.

**Squalor:** There's no profit in maintenance. Everything in this world that isn't an active corporate interest is run down, decaying, and stained. Infrastructure and urban monuments from a prior age may still work, but they do so with the minimum maintenance necessary. Slums and tenements are commonplace, and any place that looks genuinely nice has someone spending a lot of money to keep it that way. Emphasize the dirt, grime, and decay of the world, and the way in which the inhabitants no longer really register it as a problem.

**Style:** To be fashionable is to be a worthwhile human being. Those without style, without visible and artful control of their image, can clearly not be in control of anything else in their lives. If something as fundamental as the identity they project isn't disciplined and directed, then how can they be trusted to handle less obvious affairs? Different groups have different fashion standards, but even the most reckless iconoclast has to at least acknowledge the existence of a standard. Underline this in your world by making particular brands and styles extremely important markers, ones capable of changing how others see them.

**Treachery:** Everyone is out for their own interests, and they're trustworthy only so long as their interests align with yours. Everyone assumes that deals will be kept only so long as they're mutually profitable and relationships will only continue as long as they offer benefits to all parties. It's not even a surprise when a partner backstabs you, because you were probably going to do it to him first if you found a way to profit from it. In your campaign, emphasize the fragility of business or criminal relationships, and how little loyalty exists in the face of a tempting profit.

**Urbanization:** Cyberpunk stories are almost always centered around cities. Rural areas aren't just places with small towns, they're often blasted wastelands occupied by rebels and refuseniks. Everything that's important either happens in a city, or is about a city. To emphasize this theme, de-emphasize everything that exists beyond the city limits. Nothing out there matters, unless some urban event requires the PCs to enter that forsaken wilderness.

**Violence:** Murder and brutality are a commonplace in this world, with it barely even remarked upon among the underclass. Corp-backed law enforcement doesn't even pretend to care about murder among the proles, while government cops are only interested in ensuring no hostile power blocks form to threaten the government's local control. The only safety the underclass has lies in their own capacity for violence and the protection money they can pay to the local gangs. Corpers can expect better security, but if they cross their employers badly enough they can end up terminated in more ways than one.





# CREATING THE WORLD

Now that you understand the basic principles of building a sandbox campaign and you know what general themes you want to play up in your creation, it's time to start at the top and build your setting's global reality. You can follow the steps outlined in this section to get something workable, and then move down to the city level to start creating your game's more immediate backdrop.

Some readers may find the world they create at this level to be too thin, and want more detail and specifics in their creation. It's all right to indulge that urge, but save it until after you've finished the rest of the campaign creation process. You need to focus on getting to a playable, adventure-rich framework for your game before you can afford to spend your time and effort fleshing out the bones.

With that said, it's time to start building your dystopia.

## CHOOSE A DATE

The first step is to choose a date for your world, or else choose to keep it intentionally ambiguous. The further out you put the campaign's start date, the easier it is to justify drastic changes in the global situation. It's tough to imagine a global Paraguayan empire in 2043, but by 2120 all manner of things could have happened.

It's also acceptable to make the date purposefully unclear. "20--" is a popular cyberpunk-genre era for a reason, as it takes the focus off a real-world timeline and puts it on whatever political or social situation is actually extant. Nobody cares about what came before, they just need to know what's happening now.

Conversely, you might choose to give your world today's date, or even a past date, and write your setting as an alternate history. This can be particularly convenient if you want to play in a decade that never was, like a 1990s informed by cyberpunk expectations of computer discs and chunky hardware.

## CHOOSE GLOBAL PROBLEMS

The world has at least some dystopic features, so it's time to establish what's wrong with it. The table on the following pages lists twenty different problems, disasters, or major social shifts that could apply on a global basis.

Pick or roll two and mix them together. Maybe one is caused by the other, or they're just starting to cause pressure on global populations, or everyone's forced to struggle in order to avoid them becoming unsurvivably intense. Make them the primary driving force behind the globe's current condition.

As you continue to build your city and its districts, call back to these global problems. Things are the way they are because of them, and current events are still being influenced by their weight.

## CHOOSE A REGIONAL FOCUS

Once you know what time it is and what major problems exist, you should pick a chunk of the world to be the focus for your creation. Most likely, this will be the nation or area where your campaign's major city will be located. You'll need to establish some facts about the national government and current situation there before you can properly draw up your city. Let these facts be influenced by the problems you just picked.

Depending on the timeframe of your campaign world, you may be able to lift a lot of the facts about the region from our present reality. Even if you project it into the future, it's likely that some things will remain the same; Nanjing is probably going to remain Chinese, and the Sahara is likely to stay dry. If the facts the players might expect to see have changed in your world, tie them back to the problems you've established and make these issues relate to the current conditions.

## IDENTIFY ANY SUPERPOWERS

Does your world have any hegemonic superpowers or major regional leaders? Think about national governments at this stage, and decide whether or not any of them are powerful enough to exert significant control on other major nations.

Your choice of global problems may spell out an answer for you on this; you might have rolled the certainty of a global hegemon or you might have found out that your world is hopelessly balkanized. If the former is the case, pick a country and make it king. Don't worry about plausibility at this stage, as you'll retroactively justify your choices when you write history.

## MAKE FIVE MAJOR MEGACORPS

Using the megacorp creation tools on page 126, generate five global-scale megacorps to represent the biggest, scariest corporations on the planet. Each of them should focus on a different major line of business, though they all doubtless have subsidiaries and client companies in every conceivable field.

For each megacorp, pick a different country to act as its main stronghold, where its influence is most powerful. Some nations might be little more than a geopolitical skin suit for their patron corporation's chief executive, while others might still have a functional governmental bureaucracy that has made some kind of terms with the corporation's power.

Don't worry about fleshing these corporations out at this stage. All you need is a name and a few basic details. When you write the highlights of your world's history in the next step, use these nations and megacorps as the main actors in events. They and their subsidiaries are the ones taking actions and suffering consequences.



## WRITE HISTORY

At this stage, you need to get from where we are in the present day to whatever date you've selected for your world. You know what general end state you want for your setting, so it's simply a matter of bending history around until it arrives at its destination. Try answering each of the questions below in sequence to generate a basic historical outline.

If you haven't picked a specific date for your setting, you don't need to pick specific dates for your historical events, either. Just establish a sequence of events and let the periods between them stay vague.

If you're doing a retro-history, pick a point at which your world deviates from the present timeline and fill it in from there.

**What was the main cause of the current global problems?** Where were their seeds planted, and what event most characterized their inception?

**How did the major powers react to the problems at first?** What national response or megacorp reaction was most dramatic or famous?

**How did society begin to respond to the problems?** If the governments and megacorps had a high-level reaction to the start of the problems, what was the response of ordinary men and women? How did the general populace react at first?

**Who obtained the most advantage from the problems?** What nation or class profited most at first by what was happening, and what did they do with their gains?

**What initial reaction failed most dramatically?** What plan or response turned out to be most impressively wrong or unhelpful, and who suffered from it?

**How did your country fail to deal with the problem?**

The problem obviously isn't solved, so the country your starting city is located in clearly failed to deal with it. What was their plan, why did it fail, and what does its fallout look like?

**How did the problems become institutionalized?** If the problem isn't one that the authorities can solve, it becomes one they perpetuate and use for their own benefit. How are they directing the pain of these problems at their enemies or subordinates while reaping whatever limited benefits the situation provides?

**Why can't the situation last?** Stasis is the enemy of easy adventure hooks, so you want your world to be moving in a bad direction. How are its problems starting to break loose from the institutional tools used to contain them, and what are the first signs that the situation is about to get dramatically worse?

## WRAP IT UP

You don't need a lengthy and detailed global timeline when building your history. Don't worry about giving more than a paragraph or so of answers to any of the questions above, as you just need a rough sequence of events to call back to when you start developing your city and its districts.

If you do return to the timeline, make sure it's for a specific reason. You might be adding foreshadowing for your city's local issues or tweaking things to fit a theme you want to emphasize. Don't fill things out just for completion's sake unless you're having fun doing it and you've already done the other work you need to get yourself to an evening's playable adventure.



## YOUR WORLD'S PROBLEMS

You're building a dystopia, and that means your world has problems. The twenty afflictions listed here are a selection of some of the possibilities.

For most worlds, you should consider rolling or choosing twice on the table and then synthesizing the results. Maybe the first problem caused the second problem. Maybe the two problems are happening in different sections of the world. Maybe one of the problems hasn't completely happened yet, but everyone knows it's going to. The point is to give yourself some meaningful issues that are touching almost every region of the world, as you'll use those issues to help inform problems that are cropping up at the city level.

**Arcologies:** Cities have been forged into massive, self-contained arcologies with little need for the outside world beyond resource-gathering outposts. Outside of the arcologies, massive stretches of now-abandoned urban areas and desperate favelas occupy the former city footprint. To live outside an arcology is to be a dangerous outlaw.

**Balkanization:** The present-day superpowers have effectively collapsed, with no plausible heirs to impose a global order. The entire world is a patchwork of ethnic and religious groups broken down into microstates and splinter areas, many of whom nurse powerful grudges against their neighbors. There is little or no international coordination beyond the efforts of multinational megacorps, and international rules are whatever the corporations say they are.

**Caste Formation:** An international elite of hereditary megacorp families has formed a new caste of rulers and oligarchs. Lesser breeds can only hope to attach themselves to some powerful dynasty and reap the rewards of loyal service. People take it as a commonplace that these elites are smarter, better, and wiser than ordinary people, a state perhaps justified by cyberware or gengineering.

**Chrome Cultists:** Some group or social class embraced cyber and genetic manipulation to an extreme extent as an ideological position. They may have been unjustly hated and feared by the less-augmented, or they could have envisioned themselves as the naturally-superior rulers of lesser humanity. In either case, the conflict produced global chaos before the cultists were destroyed or driven underground. Heavy modern users of cyber are likely suspected of cult allegiance, but the tech is too ingrained to reject entirely.

**Class Warfare:** Numerous national revolutions cropped up around the globe. The details and ideologies varied, but they largely boiled down to revolts of the impoverished against the powerful. The powerful were utterly victorious, crushing

### d20 Global Problems

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Arcologies        |
| 2  | Balkanization     |
| 3  | Caste Formation   |
| 4  | Chrome Cultists   |
| 5  | Class Warfare     |
| 6  | Climate Change    |
| 7  | Despair           |
| 8  | Disconnection     |
| 9  | Empire            |
| 10 | Famine            |
| 11 | Mutation          |
| 12 | Natural Disaster  |
| 13 | Plague            |
| 14 | Population Flux   |
| 15 | Religious Revival |
| 16 | Resource Shortage |
| 17 | Space Exodus      |
| 18 | Toxic Wastes      |
| 19 | Urbanization      |
| 20 | Warfare           |

all institutions and organizations they did not control and cementing their dominance over virtually all material means of survival and success. Bitter remnants still fight a losing battle.

**Climate Change:** Large portions of the world are now substantially hotter, colder, wetter, drier, or are otherwise different from how they are at present. This outcome may have derived from human activity, solar perturbations, meteor strikes, interstellar dust clouds, or the nebulous work of unfathomable forces. Some areas of the planet are now largely uninhabitable due to the hostile conditions, and large numbers of people have been forced to move to find more tolerable surroundings. Portions of the coast may be inundated, while in colder cycles there may be new lands exposed by receding sea levels.

**Despair:** Global society has largely given in to nihilism, despair, and hopelessness. The universal craving is for distraction and numbing pleasures, occasionally punctuated by furious dedication to some deranged cause that might give a person's life meaning. Birth rates have plummeted, populations have shrunk, and people now struggle over their share of an ever-shrinking economy.



**Disconnection:** Nations, regions, and cities have turned inward and largely sought to cut off contacts with other polities, the better to control the diffusion of dangerous facts and ideas. The only wide-scale communication exists at the corporate level and well-controlled government communication lines. Citizens of a particular region are discouraged from travel and permitted to learn only what their betters want them to learn of other places. The outside world is dangerous; only the authorities can be trusted to interact with it.

**Empire:** One nation or polity has succeeded in crushing all its significant rivals. The only nations that exist are those directly subordinate to the superpower and those too impoverished and isolated to be worth vassalizing. The world's megacorps are constantly fighting to control the superpower's government, and different corps may have mutually-hostile grips on different departments or regions of the polity.

**Famine:** A massive shortage of basic food staples has been created by crop diseases, climate change, industrial pollution, or overpopulation. Much of the world's land area is no longer usable for crops, and polities struggle to control fertile zones in order to feed their people. Hunger is a basic fact of life for anyone below the middle class.

**Mutation:** Industrial toxins, poorly-tested cyberware, experimental gene therapy, or unsafe pharmaceuticals have produced large numbers of mutated humans or wildlife. Most of these mutations are harmful in nature, requiring cybernetic prostheses to mitigate them, though some might unexpectedly improve the victim. Many mutants may be forced to work for whatever organization can support their critically-important medical cyber.

**Natural Disaster:** A global-scale natural catastrophe scourged the planet. A meteor strike, super-volcano eruption, atmospheric composition disturbance, or other vast calamity destroyed humanity over a considerable portion of the planet and forced the survivors into far more restricted areas. At least one generation was forced to concern itself with bare survival at all costs.

**Plague:** One or more global pandemics have culled humanity, with a substantial percentage of the population dying off. Reservoirs of the sickness may still persist in isolated areas, and repeated waves of lesser virulence may still strike cities. Some particularly hard-hit regions of the globe may have been largely depopulated, and might remain uninhabitable if the disease has found some natural animal host there.

**Population Flux:** The world is either drastically overpopulated or extremely underpopulated. There may have been a dramatic upswing in population growth after corporate and governmental efforts, leading to a world of packed arcologies and seaboard-wide megaplexes, or a combination of disasters and despair may have left the world all but empty except for a few remaining population centers and the megacorps who fight over their human debris.

**Religious Revival:** One or more religions or ideologies have caught fire in the recent past, experiencing tremendous growth in adherents and general fervor. These may be old religions given new relevance by present hardships, or some new faith built to appeal to the current public. Numerous conflicts have erupted in areas where the new faith has collided with old, traditional beliefs.

**Resource Shortage:** One or more critical resources, such as petroleum, rare earths, copper, or other material has run short either through over-exploitation or some new, disastrous natural reaction with modern atmospheric pollutants. Control of the remaining sources of this material is a common prize in megacorp struggles, and ordinary people have been forced to learn how to do without many things dependent on the substance.

**Space Exodus:** A chunk of humanity has left Earth for points further out in the solar system. There may be colonies on the moon, outposts on Mars, or vast orbital habitats to serve as sanctuaries for the rich and powerful. Earth is heavily exploited for its pool of human labor and the few resources that are more copious there than in the asteroid belt.

**Toxic Wastes:** Industrial production has resulted in the creation of massive toxic zones on land and sea, where life is either impossible or terribly changed. Former inhabitants of these areas have either died or fled into exile, and many nations have suffered serious civil strife due to the chaos created by the pollution. Whatever kind of toxin it was, it was probably subtle enough that no one realized the consequences until it was widespread.

**Urbanization:** Both governments and megacorps agree on the utility of compacting their subjects and consumers into more easily-controlled urban centers. In the past decade, rural and small city populations have been "encouraged" to move into corp-controlled cities, to the point that there are vast swaths of land occupied only by corporate farms and returning wilderness.

**Warfare:** At least one global conflict has erupted within living memory, possibly with a nuclear exchange. The conflict may have derived from the death throes of a superpower, a regional conflict that escalated out of control, or the clash of puppet governments serving the wills of quarreling megacorps.

# CREATING THE CITY

Your initial city will be the backdrop for most of the early sessions of your campaign, and it may well be the main stage for the full life of the game. As such, it's important that you build a city that can support a wide variety of missions and adventures, because you don't want to have to generate a new dystopian megalopolis every few sessions.

By following the steps in this section you should be able to put together a playable starting point for your game. If your PCs find it necessary to decamp for new climes, you can come back to this section to generate their new stomping grounds elsewhere.

## PICK YOUR CITY

The first step is to choose the modern city that will be the initial seed for your future metropolis. There are three common ways to pick this initial city.

**Choose one you know well.** Pick a city you and your players are very familiar with. This constrains you somewhat as the changes and districts you create will have to maintain a bare minimum of plausibility to an informed audience, but it makes fleshing the city out with local flavor much easier.

**Choose one no one knows well.** If you pick a city that none of your players know anything about, you can cheerfully fill in its blank spaces with any details you need. This puts considerably more creative work on your shoulders, but it also spares you having to do more than nod at current reality.

**Create a new fictional city.** For maximum creative freedom, insert a new city in whatever region you've chosen for your campaign. It might be an amalgam of some current cities or a work of pure alt-historical fiction inserted into your game world's timeline. This angle is by far the least encumbered by reality, but it also puts the most work on you to build your city into a living, breathing, plausible sort of place.

## CHOOSE YOUR PROBLEMS

Use the city problems table on the following page to roll or pick two main problems for your city or its surrounding region. If possible, relate them to the global problems you've already established; maybe they're the consequences of these larger-scale issues, or maybe they somehow reflect the steps that the people here are taking to deal with these global woes.

Some of the problems on the table are best taken to reflect the political or social problems of the city's surrounding region or nation. The city can't afford to be a bystander if a civil war's broken out in the nation it belongs to, and even if the problem isn't specific to the city itself, it's still something the locals are going to have to deal with. If you need some inspiration for tying things together, look back to the cyberpunk theme list and let those genre tropes direct you.

## GET A MAP

The next step is to get a GM map for your city. This is not intended to be a final, player-facing map, and it's not meant to be pretty, scale-accurate, or detailed. It's just a basic platform for structuring your creative work. There are several ways to get this map.

**Steal a real city's map.** Search online for a city with the same climate as your desired metropolis and steal its map wholesale. If you're using a city that exists in the real world, just loot its current city map. If the map's not big enough for a city of the size you imagine, then either expand the map scale or find another map and mash it directly up against the first. Sketch in connections for roads, rivers, and major terrain features.

**Work from a terrain map.** If you don't want to pirate a real city's map, download a topographical map of the area you want your city to occupy. Once you have that map, draw a broad outline on it of the city's full extent, letting major geographic features or political borders form the edges of your city's development. The edges of this zone may be suburban or less fully-developed, but don't worry about details such as density or roads just now.

**Sketch relations on blank paper.** Take a completely blank sheet of paper. Draw a coastline, if one exists. Scrawl in some little lumps for hilly terrain and sharp peaks for any mountains. Add at least one river, keeping in mind that rivers always flow downhill. Next, draw an outline of the city's extent, with at least two-thirds of the city on one side of the river, and a smaller, newer portion on the other side. Use the terrain features as physical boundaries for your city, along with any other land that wouldn't be convenient to build on.

At this stage, all you need is a basic, crude diagram of your city, one sufficient to show relationships between major geographic features and the basic outline of its urban extent. Don't worry about details like map scales, roads, individual buildings, or other particulars; you'll deal with those as you need them.

## MARK OUT DISTRICTS

Your city needs to be divided into districts, the better to help you keep a handle on the sandbox elements of your campaign. You don't need to mark out every district in your city, and indeed, you probably shouldn't at this stage. The only districts you really need to define consist of the district you start your campaign in and its immediate neighbors.

Look at the map you've made and identify the city's internal borders. Rivers and major roads are the big ones; each one of those forms a line with a different district on each side. If you haven't yet added major roads to your city, add a half-dozen or so running to the edges of your map and use them as boundaries.



Once you've sketched out those borders, chop up the space inside them using smaller roads and public features like parks, canals, power transmission corridors, internal walls, or other physical markers. It's perfectly reasonable to draw your boundaries first and then add in the roads and public features you need to justify them.

Overall, you want to define one starting district and two to four neighboring districts. Your entire city should probably consist of about a dozen different districts as a whole, if not fewer, but you don't need to actually make decisions about them until they become relevant in play. Remember, all your effort at this stage of development should be directed toward getting to your first session's adventure. All the other peripheral details can wait until you need them.

### PICK THE MAJOR CORPS

Which megacorps have the most influence on the city? You can use the corp generation tables on page 126 to generate four or five corporations that have a major stake in the city. They might have regional headquarters in a particular district or have a long history of business with the local government. Depending on their degree of influence, they might *be* the local government for all intents and purposes.

These are not the only corporations in the city, and you can always insert new ones if your adventures require them. These other corps have only branch offices, retail outlets, or licensing deals, and they probably don't have enough pull to merit serious government attention.

### BUILD YOUR STARTING DISTRICT

Now go to the district where you plan to start your adventures, and use the guidelines on page 121 to build it out. This district is the one that should get the most attention from you; you'll need to populate it with a suitable set of traits, major NPCs, influential corps, and current problems so you have easy grist for generating missions and adventures.

For its two to four neighboring districts, you don't need to be so thorough. You might generate the same general information you did for your starting district, but you don't need to build out the details. Use those districts and their problems and NPCs as filler for the missions you generate, when you need some outside power or influential NPC for your adventures.

### CREATE YOUR STARTING ADVENTURE

The final step of setting creation is to build your initial adventure with the tools starting on page 142. You need a simple, straightforward adventure to introduce your players to the game system and the initial district of your campaign setting. The point is to bring them to the world rather than to tie them up in an extended plot line, so you want your first adventure to be a simple, one-session affair.

At the end of the session you'll feed the players at least five future adventure hooks, either as missions offered by a local fixer or as obvious profit opportunities revealed by events. Be explicit about them; don't let the PCs flail around looking for their next job. Once they decide what job to take, you know what to prepare for your next game session.





## YOUR CITY'S PROBLEMS

Some of the following fifty calamities have shaped life in your city and its surrounding region. While some of them may have positive or useful aspects, their consequences have provoked a lot of the problems the locals are currently trying to deal with.

To get a basic overview of the city, roll at least twice on the table below. Some issues might be directly applicable to your particular city, while other problems are the kind of woes that could be affecting the entire country, state, or region around your main city, with the locals having taken whatever steps were necessary to maintain their home.

One problem might be the genesis of the other, or you could roll additional problems for specific sub-zones of a city or different parts of the surrounding region. The same problem might manifest in multiple different ways in a region, as individual cities and communities try to cope with it by means of various responses that may not work as intended.

| d00   | Problem                 | d00   | Problem              |
|-------|-------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| 1-2   | Anarchy                 | 51-52 | Local Military       |
| 3-4   | Awakening               | 53-54 | Mass Terrorism       |
| 5-6   | Booming Economy         | 55-56 | Messianic Leader     |
| 7-8   | Border Lockdown         | 57-58 | Natural Disaster     |
| 9-10  | Bubble Economy          | 59-60 | New Identity         |
| 11-12 | City Collapse           | 61-62 | New Industry         |
| 13-14 | Civil War               | 63-64 | New Union            |
| 15-16 | Clearances              | 65-66 | Nuclear Blast        |
| 17-18 | Climate Change          | 67-68 | Offensive War        |
| 19-20 | Corp Nationalization    | 69-70 | Old Scores           |
| 21-22 | Corp War                | 71-72 | Oligarchy            |
| 23-24 | Corporate Collapse      | 73-74 | Outside Control      |
| 25-26 | Corrupt Leaders         | 75-76 | Plague               |
| 27-28 | Death Squads            | 77-78 | Political Sorting    |
| 29-30 | Defensive War           | 79-80 | Population Cleansing |
| 31-32 | Dynastic Rulers         | 81-82 | Religious Purge      |
| 33-34 | Economic Collapse       | 83-84 | Renegade Military    |
| 35-36 | Failed Invasion         | 85-86 | Resource Strike      |
| 37-38 | Famine                  | 87-88 | Revolution           |
| 39-40 | Immigrants              | 89-90 | Satrapy              |
| 41-42 | Industrial Spill        | 91-92 | Secession            |
| 43-44 | Inept Rulers            | 93-94 | Slave Labor          |
| 45-46 | Infrastructure Collapse | 95-96 | Stolen Prosperity    |
| 47-48 | Internal Migration      | 97-98 | Tyranny              |
| 49-50 | Legal Underclass        | 99-00 | Uprising             |

**Anarchy:** The region has spent some time in a state of ungoverned lawlessness, a condition that might still persist. Local authority rests with those who can provide resources or who can bring violent force to bear. Numerous would-be governmental groups fought to lay claim to the area, and very harsh arrangements might be tolerated so long as they bring a modicum of social order to people's lives.

**Awakening:** A great ideal, cause, or religion caught fire in the region, inspiring large numbers of people to follow it even at great personal cost. At least one major social institution was born of this awakening, and it still might hold substantial power even if the initial fervor has since died away.

**Booming Economy:** This area was lucky in the recent past, and provided some resource or industrial center that brought in tremendous wealth. Most of it went to the megacorps and the elites, but enough of it trickled down to leave some impressive monuments in its wake.

**Border Lockdown:** The region had some reason to tightly seal its borders, preventing people from entering or exiting without the right connections or governmental passes. It may have perceived some special threat from outsiders, or it was so miserable that its inhabitants had to be imprisoned to keep them from fleeing. The physical walls, minefields, and monitoring stations that kept the border tight probably still exist.

**Bubble Economy:** The region had something that was extremely valuable until it wasn't. Vast wealth was followed by a vaster crash, and the dilapidated remnants of former glory still litter the place.

**City Collapse:** The city or region collapsed utterly in the recent past, becoming largely uninhabitable for most of its then-inhabitants. It may have been the result of some natural disaster, a terrible famine, a ferocious war, or some other disaster that has only slowly abated in the years since.

**Civil War:** The region was split between two or more mutually-hostile governments, each determined to crush all opposition. They may have splintered along ideological lines, ethnic faults, or corporate allegiances, but the destruction was calamitous. One of the sides may have won a convincing victory, or they may have simply fought each other to a mutually-exhausted stalemate.

**Clearances:** Significant portions of the region were methodically purged of inhabitants in order to satisfy the needs of the government or megacorps. The land they occupied may have been more valuable to corporate owners, they might have been persistent troublemakers to their rulers, or natural hazards may have been so severe that they had no choice but to leave. Their heirs likely still suffer the consequences of their losses, and may not be overly welcome in the places they now live.

**Climate Change:** Whether the world as a whole has changed or not, this region certainly has. Local conditions have become severe, with drought, heat, cold, or sea level changes provoking serious problems to the inhabitants. There are probably still remnants buildings and communities that existed during the former, more clement period, now abandoned by all but the most desperate hangers-on.

**Corp Nationalization:** The local government nationalized a megacorp in the region, turning it into a direct arm of the local authorities. Conversely, the corp may have effectively taken over the local government from the inside, making its “private” branch no more than a subsidized agency of the state. If the megacorp exists elsewhere as well, those branches may be bitter toward their “stolen” or “traitorous” fellow corpers.

**Corp War:** Two or more megacorps had an all-out war in the region at some time in the past, deploying corporate military forces and hired mercenaries to destroy enemy resources and kill their employees. Outside parties may have moved in to crush the weakened corps after they’d bled each other white, or one corp may have finally won a nominal victory and taken control over the debris.

**Corporate Collapse:** A megacorp that was crucial to the economy of the region collapsed sometime in the recent past, dragging scores of local businesses down with it. It may have been the fruit of corporate error, hostile outside attacks, or a parent corporation deciding that the place simply wasn’t worth the investment. Hollowed-out remnants of the corp’s buildings and factories likely still litter the region.

**Corrupt Leaders:** The rulers of this region were even more corrupt than is usual for those in their position, trading the wealth and lives of their subjects for their own selfish purposes. They may have been so absorbed in exploiting the locals that the actual business of rule was taken over by outside parties, whether corporations, gangs, or local brotherhoods.

**Death Squads:** A political, religious, or corporate war was fought here under the cover of night, with death squads and other militant groups making efforts to murder specific opponents of their backers. Certain political views or corporate affiliations were enough to get people disappeared, and the leaders of these death squads may have since moved on to positions of governmental or corporate importance.

**Defensive War:** The region was invaded by a hostile outside power, be it a neighboring government, an organized militant group, or an aggressive megacorp. The damage the conflict caused is yet visible in the region, whether or not the invaders were successful in taking control of the place.

**Dynastic Rulers:** The leadership of the region is tightly controlled by a particular family, with all the most important positions going to scions of the blood. This family may exist in considerable tension with the government or megacorp they supposedly represent, their local influence a degree of power that their supposed superiors would rather they not have.

**Economic Collapse:** The region was reasonably prosperous until some twist of global politics or local economic disaster plunged them into poverty. Their major industries were lost, their people left to toil in desperate exploitation, and the few green shoots of present prosperity are threatened by powers that prefer the region’s current impoverishment. Numerous small local organizations and brotherhoods have sprung up to give the locals some means of survival.

**Failed Invasion:** Either the region tried to invade a neighbor or was invaded by an outside power. In either case, the effort was a failure, with the would-be conquerors either absorbed, ejected, or left to flounder in persistent failure. The resentment and bitterness between those involved has left numerous scars on the region.

**Famine:** Hunger has scourged the region in the recent past. Local food sources failed and some collection of events made it impossible to bring in adequate supplies from elsewhere. Many of the poorest denizens starved, and those that couldn’t flee to other places were left to make whatever bargains they had to make in order to get their daily soy. Food supplies in the present day are likely under the tight control of whatever authorities rule here.



**Immigrants:** The region experienced a major flux of immigrants from another area, ones attracted by its relative prosperity or forced to flee their former home by some calamity there. The locals are unlikely to have welcomed the new competition for regional resources and influence, and these immigrants may still be bubbled into ghettos and ethnic zones where they must make do as best they can.

**Industrial Spill:** A large-scale industrial accident caused grave damage in the region, a calamity that still exerts a presence in current affairs. There may be valuable salvage left in the contaminated zone, or refugees may still be a problem in neighboring areas, or resentment over the accident may still be causing reprisals and violence among those affected.

**Inept Rulers:** The leaders of the region made some extremely bad choices, either out of self-interest or sheer incompetence. When facing some problem, they likely made the worst possible choice in how to deal with it, and now the present-day inhabitants have to deal with the consequences of their ineptitude.

**Infrastructure Collapse:** Whether water, power, transport, public security, or some other critical component of modern life, the region has suffered a severe lack of it. Natural resources may have been exhausted, megacorp manipulation may have ruined it, or it may have been taken over by renegade elements. Even now, most people need to make a considerable effort to get access to this necessity rather than counting on it to be available.

**Internal Migration:** Natives from one section of the region had to move to another, forced out by necessity or tempted by better prosperity. This migration doubtless caused considerable hostility between the newcomers and the locals, with the local government or megacorps fanning the flames when it proved profitable to their own interests. These migrants may still be second-class citizens within their own homeland.

**Legal Underclass:** A particular chunk of the populace lacks the rights that most of natives have. They may be discriminated against due to race, religion, political allegiance, or megacorp employment, but crimes against them are seldom taken seriously and they have little hope of prevailing in any legal suit against a more respected local. It's not uncommon for them to be involved with crime rings or express their discontent through violence and terrorism.

**Local Military:** The region has an exceptionally well-developed military under control of the local government or megacorps. This military was usually developed as a response to events, either to take advantage of a weaker neighbor or to prevent a takeover by some aggressive outside power. The locals likely struggle over control of the military, using it as muscle to pursue their own purposes.

**Mass Terrorism:** The region was convulsed with a period of mass terrorist attacks by one or more organizations, with large numbers of people killed through bombs, chemical warfare, biological agents, massacres, or other large-scale acts of violence in pursuit of their political goals. The existing government or megacorps were either powerless to stop it or uninterested in doing so, as the outcome of this violence was something profitable to their own interests.

**Messianic Leader:** A tremendously charismatic leader rose to control the region, marshaling a vast following of zealous adherents who were convinced that their fondest dreams would be made real. If the leader is now dead or gone, their cause has been embodied in some institution or faction determined to carry out their grand plan, regardless of its cost to other locals.

**Natural Disaster:** One or more dramatic natural disasters scourged the region, producing enormous loss of life and the destruction of important infrastructure. The locals had to figure out some way around these problems, and many of their solutions involved depriving other, less powerful natives of what they needed to live. The physical consequences of the disaster have still left marks in the region's infrastructure.

**New Identity:** The inhabitants of the region were forced to adopt a new self-identity, perhaps after being annexed by another group, the outlawing of a former religion or institution, or the forcible introduction of outside culture. The adoption of the superseded identities is taken to be a form of rebellion or disloyalty to the region's rulers.

**New Industry:** The region acquired a new industry that has left a substantial mark on the local economy. Many corporations revolve around supporting and expanding this industry, and it's attracted the hostility of outside corps who are competitors.





**New Union:** The region was united with another city or polity, whether or not it liked the idea. It may have been the conquering victor of a military action, the unfortunate victim of annexation, or driven into an alliance by some local crisis or dire need. The old power structures struggle to come out as the rulers of the new union, and the losers seek to tear the structure apart.

**Nuclear Blast:** Someone set off a nuke in the area, either as a terrorist action, an industrial mishap, or a military assault by some nuclear-armed foe. There may still be areas devastated by the destruction and considerable numbers of citizens who bear the scars of the disaster. Valuable resources or territory may be inaccessible in the aftermath.

**Offensive War:** The region went to war against a neighbor, provoked by their actions or tempted by the prospects of easy pickings. The attack may or may not have been successful, but a generation of locals has been shaped by military service and the privations of wartime life.

**Old Scores:** Several major groups in the region have grudges to settle against each other. Old crimes, former atrocities, prior betrayals, and other sins have yet to be repaid, though the current situation may force some of these groups to work together to keep the region functioning. They're very likely to hire deniable assets to work out their resentments.

**Oligarchy:** The region is rigidly controlled by an oligarchy of the elite, who shuffle around positions in megacorps and governments without ever allowing new blood into the circle. Lesser officials and vice-executives align themselves with particular oligarchs, and these factions tend to cut across lines of corporate or government organization.

**Outside Control:** The region's government is a puppet controlled by some outside power, one that likely has little or no interest in the wellbeing of the locals. The government may have been infiltrated by corporate agents, suborned by powerful outside influences, or simply so weak that they don't dare oppose the commands of their controllers. Policies are often established that do nothing to benefit the locals but do much to aid the outside authority.

**Plague:** The region was scourged by a severe plague in the recent past, with vast numbers of casualties. Medical services were strained beyond endurance, mass graves were established, and numerous local institutions were gutted by the loss of many important members. There may still be reservoirs of the sickness awaiting a new outbreak.

**Political Sorting:** The region has two or more major political groups that have geographically sorted themselves into particular areas or neighborhoods. Belonging to the wrong faction in such areas is hazardous at best, and there are regular illicit raids and reprisals conducted between them over slights real and imagined. If a single government controls multiple areas like this, the battle for control of the top level of governance can be brutal.

**Population Cleansing:** A particular religion, ethnicity, corporate affiliation, or nationality has been purged from the city in the recent past, their possessions seized by the local government or native elites. The jobs they did have been left unfilled or occupied by newcomers who may not perform them as well as before. There may still remain pockets of the purged group, and terrorism or violence on their behalf is not unknown.

**Religious Purge:** A particular religion or ideology is especially disfavored in the region, and none of its members can expect to be entrusted with any government office or corporate role of any importance, nor are they allowed to inhabit the better social circles. Its believers are often considered disloyal, hostile, and dangerous to the locals. This assessment may be correct for many of the angriest among them.

**Renegade Military:** The region's military forces have gone rogue and have established a state of martial law. The government is now in the hands of military officers, most of whom are obliged to maintain good relations with the regional megacorps if they're to keep their forces operational. In some cases, megacorp military forces or gang militias might be strong enough to take this role.

**Resource Strike:** A new resource has been found in the region recently, and it's drawn intense interest from local corporations and desperate prospectors. This resource may be a conventional one like oil or gold, or it might be a more abstract thing, like a tremendously vigorous art scene or entrancing new musical genre. The corporations are still fighting over control of its monetization.

**Revolution:** An ideological revolution recently overturned the government of the region, and a new ruling structure may not have fully coalesced yet out of the surviving insurrectionists. Conversely, a revolution might have been brutally crushed by the authorities, its former leaders now in hiding. In neither case is the actual situation of the city likely to improve measurably.

**Satrapy:** The region is a recognized vassal of some larger or more powerful city or polity. Its rulers are allowed to do as they please so long as they provide the requisite amounts of tribute and obedience to their superiors. Different megacorps may be fighting over who is to benefit from the region's submission.

**Secession:** The region split off from its parent polity sometime in the recent past, fighting off attempts to reclaim it or finding an alliance with an overlord powerful enough to protect it from its former rulers. The split may have been caused by political differences, economic concerns, or widespread rejection of some governmental policy. It may also have been provoked by a gang, megacorp, or organization that thought a splinter region would be easier to control.

**Slave Labor:** The region practices open slavery, though it may not call it that. Slavery may be a penalty for debt, a criminal punishment, or a class condition imposed on a disfavored religion, ethnicity, or national origin; whatever induces it, the local government is at pains to justify it as a fair and reasonable allocation of human resources.

**Stolen Prosperity:** The region should be much wealthier than it is, but the profit from its industries and local resources are being siphoned off by an outside power. The governmental rulers may be stealing it for their own use, a powerful megacorp may have a stranglehold on its finances, or a military aggressor may be taking it as war debt.

**Tyranny:** The region's ruling powers won't leave their subjects alone, and impose numerous humiliating, aggravating, or offensive demands on them for the government's own benefit. The necessity for these demands may be blamed on the threat of a hostile outside power, or the local rulers may simply have clamped down so tight on their subjects that they don't dare loosen their grip lest the hint of freedom ignite an explosion.

**Uprising:** The region experienced an outburst of violence from a particular group or social class, one that caused substantial damage before it was quelled. The survivors likely nurse a grudge still, and the local government and megacorps are trying to stamp out the last embers of this resistance. The rising was likely triggered by some exceptionally intolerable offense, or the group may have been gradually accumulating enough success and influence that it no longer accepted its former subordinate state.



# BUILDING YOUR DISTRICTS

Your city is broken up into districts to simplify your GM burden. It's much easier to keep track of NPCs in a single neighborhood than to manage an entire megalopolis worth of names and faces. Most districts are cohesive enough that outside influence and control is something unusual and noteworthy, so you'll have fewer moving parts to keep in mind when running events in them.

To build a district, follow the steps below. For your starting district, be thorough about them, as you're going to be using these details in your first game session. For any other districts, you can afford to just roll the minimum and flesh it out later when it becomes pertinent to play.

## CHOOSE DISTRICT TRAITS

Use the table on the following page to roll or pick two significant traits for the district. These traits will shape the local economy and culture, and most of the power brokers in the district will have their influence somehow tied up in these traits.

## CHOOSE THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT

Civic governments are notoriously feeble in most cyberpunk settings, but they're still strong enough to have their way when it's not inconvenient for the megacorps. Most district governments will consist of circles of faceless bureaucrats working in irrelevant departments. Sometimes, however, the PCs will get tangled with law enforcement or need to "persuade" certain functionaries to grant special permits or access to secret information.

Generate three government official NPCs with the table on page 130. Give them names and particulars as the tables indicate, but don't give them official roles or positions yet. When you develop your missions and adventures and need a government official, pull one of these NPCs and slot them in.

## DEFINE THE LOCAL GANGS

Now use the tables on page 128 to generate at least three local gangs or criminal organizations. You might sketch in their turf control on the district map, or leave them as free-floating organizations. These gangs will provide antagonists, environmental threats, and employers for your PCs.

Generate a gang boss and an underling for each of the gangs with the NPC creation tables. The gang boss will be a major NPC the players likely know about, while the underling can be slotted into an adventure when you need the PCs to face a particular gang foe or get a job offer from one of them.

## DEFINE THE MAJOR LOCAL CORPS

Which of the city's corporations are most significant here? You've already generated four or five that have city-wide importance, so pick at least two to be major players here. You need more than one so you can have them be running operations against each other, and so you can give the PCs some options as to which corp to back or attack.

For each corp you picked, generate a representative NPC with the NPC creation tables. This NPC will serve as a mission broker or corp face for the PCs when you need one for your adventures.

## DEFINE THE LOCAL FIXERS

Highly self-motivated PCs can often generate their own adventure hooks, but most groups need a helping hand when it comes to identifying profit opportunities in the city. That's where the local fixers come in.

Use the tools on page 168 to generate three different fixers, perhaps ones that specialize in different kinds of missions or different sets of employers. When you need an NPC to deliver a job offer to the PCs, pick one of these to do the talking.

## SKETCH A DISTRICT MAP

Go back to the city map you've made and make a blow-up of the starting district. Assign it a scale, since distances matter at this level of play.

Your map may be practically blank at this point, without anything but the most major roads and geographical features. This is perfectly acceptable; you'll mark down businesses, corp offices, and major features as they come up in play or as you generate them as part of your adventure prep. None of these places need to be marked until they start to matter.

If you're assigning local turf to the gang bosses, mark it on the map. Local PCs will almost certainly know about these details, as it can be extremely unhealthy to be ignorant about a particular block's criminal protectors.

## PICK A NAME

Lastly, knowing what you now do about the district, give it a name. This may be its official name on city documents, or it may just be a conventional slang name or traditional identifier used by the locals.

These names often relate to the biggest local industry, a notable building or monument, a topographical feature, a famous or important early resident, or some long-forgotten property developer's idea of what sounded attractive.





## DEFINING TRAITS OF A DISTRICT

The table below offers some suggestions as to possible defining traits for a district in your city. If a particular trait shows up in more than one district, it may be a phenomenon that shares a single base cause.

**Abject Despair:** This district has been utterly and mercilessly exploited by others in the city, its inhabitants denied all but the most vital public services and used purely for their value as disposable labor and entertainment. The locals no longer have any hope for anything better, and most seek only to escape their misery in drugs, VR, or violence.

**Annexed District:** A significant part of the district used to be an independent city or town with its own officials and government. At some time in living memory, the city annexed it, with or without its consent, and the former rulers still seethe with resentment, perhaps retaining certain secrets about the place.

| d00   | Trait                | d00   | Trait             |
|-------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1-2   | Abject Despair       | 51-52 | Lasting Scar      |
| 3-4   | Annexed District     | 53-54 | Local Spirit      |
| 5-6   | Art Scene            | 55-56 | Lost Glory        |
| 7-8   | Beast Infestation    | 57-58 | Luxury Haven      |
| 9-10  | Blockaded Streets    | 59-60 | Malcontent Locals |
| 11-12 | Border Dispute       | 61-62 | Media Factory     |
| 13-14 | Canal District       | 63-64 | Old Capital       |
| 15-16 | Corp Outpost         | 65-66 | Open Parkland     |
| 17-18 | Corp Stronghold      | 67-68 | Orbital Link      |
| 19-20 | Corrupt Kingpin      | 69-70 | Organleggers      |
| 21-22 | Crazed Gangers       | 71-72 | Outsider Enclave  |
| 23-24 | Dark Market          | 73-74 | Painful Profits   |
| 25-26 | Depths Below         | 75-76 | Religious Center  |
| 27-28 | Extreme Violence     | 77-78 | Restive Locals    |
| 29-30 | Gang Warfare         | 79-80 | Restricted Access |
| 31-32 | Gentrification       | 81-82 | Secessionists     |
| 33-34 | Good Times           | 83-84 | Shifting Trait    |
| 35-36 | Grand Structure      | 85-86 | Smuggler's Den    |
| 37-38 | Heavy Chrome         | 87-88 | Sweatshop Labor   |
| 39-40 | High Mutation        | 89-90 | Tomb District     |
| 41-42 | Highly Fashionable   | 91-92 | Transport Nexus   |
| 43-44 | Human Trade          | 93-94 | Urban Maze        |
| 45-46 | Immigrant Ghetto     | 95-96 | Utility Lack      |
| 47-48 | Impending Doom       | 97-98 | Vice Dens         |
| 49-50 | Industrial Wasteland | 99-00 | Vital Resource    |

**Art Scene:** The district has at least one powerful artistic movement active in it. The medium may be sculpture, music, graffiti, biomods, or anything else that speaks to an aesthetic, but everyone knows that it's where the ambitious young artists seek recognition and glory. Anything that can be monetized will also draw corp attention.

**Beast Infestation:** A particular type of dangerous animal or vermin infests the district, perhaps having escaped from a local laboratory, having been cultivated as guard animals by local gangs, or having found something particularly appealing about the local industrial sites. These creatures are usually hostile and hungry, and the locals have to take steps to protect themselves.

**Blockaded Streets:** It's very difficult to move freely in this district, as numerous roads and neighborhoods have been blockaded by gangs or city officials due to outside raids, local disorder, or simple profit-making opportunities. Bribes or "tolls" are needed to bypass these blockages, or else local connections may be required.

**Border Dispute:** The district's power structure is under siege by rivals who are trying to carve off the better pieces for their own jurisdiction. The fight may be waged in the city's administration or it may be a matter of criminal and gang clashes.

**Canal District:** Where other districts have streets, this one has waterways. It may be the product of never-corrected flooding, a seacoast geography, or a city improvement plan gone awry, but the locals have gotten used to getting around in small boats. Aquatic cyber is relatively common here.

**Corp Outpost:** A corporation that doesn't otherwise have much influence in the city has an outpost here, one too important to the locals for the other corps to pry it loose. They may be providing goods and services more cheaply than the local corps can, or be in a tenuous alliance with some city power that finds their presence useful.

**Corp Stronghold:** One particular corp holds de facto rule over the district, with the municipal officials totally supine. Other corps might have small retail outlets for their products, but the ruling corp has the ability to keep all but the most minor of outsider influences off of their turf. The regional headquarters for the corp may well be in the district.

**Corrupt Kingpin:** A particular gang boss, city official, or corporate executive is the unofficial king of this district. Nothing major happens without their approval, and their approval is very expensive. Other power centers in the district exist only as minions to the kingpin or as aspiring usurpers, and the latter seldom live long.

**Crazed Gangers:** Most gangs are at least slightly bizarre in their rites and customs, but the gang powers here are absolutely insane. They take their particular obsessions to unprofitable extremes, being driven by a demented religion, lunatic ideology, or absurd dictate of fashion. Their leaders may be fully aware of the irrationality of their chosen life, but be too nihilistic or privately profiting by it to abandon their path.

**Dark Market:** The district is known for one or more black market zones where numerous illicit goods and services can be procured by outsiders. Most of these markets have a protector in some city official or corp executive, who can be expected to profit by the market's continuing existence.

**Depths Below:** A significant portion of the district is subterranean, the locals having repurposed old infrastructure tunnels, mineshafts, or subterranean buildings for their own purposes. Most such underways are under the control of gang bosses, local chieftains, and others indisposed to legal forms.

**Extreme Violence:** Most districts see regular gunfire among their lower classes, but this place takes it to a bloody extreme. Only the suicidal go about without visible weaponry, and entire blocks may be no-go zones for anyone not in a well-armed group. The locals may profit from this reputation, earning a premium as thugs or assassins, or some outside power may find profit in keeping the blood flowing.

**Gang Warfare:** All but the most tightly-controlled districts have some level of gang conflict, but the level of violence here is unsustainably high. Something has provoked a savage degree of struggle here and it's not going to end until the question is resolved, the corps move in with heavy firepower, or one participant emerges victorious.

**Gentrification:** Something has changed recently, and the district is receiving an influx of new inhabitants who are richer or better-connected. Long-time local powers are being deposed in favor of new money, and their clients are losing their support. Existing resources of land or economic opportunity are being seized by the newcomers, who likely share a corporate background or cultural identity.

**Good Times:** Things are actually pretty good in this district. Whether by chance or design, the local economy is strong enough to give people hope of upward advancement and the local streets are unusually safe. These good times can easily provoke restiveness among the populace, however, as they move to strike violently against anything that threatens their prosperity.

**Grand Structure:** Some massive human construction dominates the district, be it a vast bridge, looming tower, crumbling arcology, or huge excavation. If

the structure is still functional, most of the "legitimate" locals earn their living working on it. Other structures may be ruined, abandoned, or being fought over by the corps.

**Heavy Chrome:** Cyberware is unusually common in this district. It may be necessary for the local industrial workers, or it may be offered as blemished seconds by a corporate outlet, or the local culture may find it very important to be chromed. Numerous cyberdocs and clinics can be found here, though the low-end ones may be fit only for the poorest and most desperate buyers.

**High Mutation:** Long-time locals are prone to one or more physical stigmata produced by the local environment. It may be a legacy of a chemical spill, pathogen release, a heritable cyber-induced genetic malfunction, or some other persistent cause. These marks may be consistent, or the locals might all exhibit them in their own way.

**Highly Fashionable:** For whatever reason, this district is now the place to see and be seen in the city. Celebrities and officials have made it their second home, with clubs and other institutions springing up to cater to the fashionable upper class. Even shabby lodgings go for premium rates, and many of the locals are eager to profit while the vogue lasts.

**Human Trade:** People are bought and sold here, perhaps openly and perhaps under the rubric of "training indentures" or "debt repayment plans". Most of the major powers here are involved in this human trafficking, and other city inhabitants know that the easiest place to get "workers" is in this district.

**Immigrant Ghetto:** A chunk of the district is occupied by immigrants from outside the city. Some such zones are mono-ethnic, while others are simply dumping grounds for the desperate, foolish, or optimistic who have come in search of work or success. These ghettos are usually minimally policed, order being maintained by ethnic gangs or the human traffickers who bring the newcomers.

**Impending Doom:** The district's main industry is about to die, its criminal kingpin is on his deathbed, two equally-powerful gangs are about to go to war, or some other rapidly-approaching reckoning threatens to throw the district into chaos. Everyone knows it's going to happen soon, and everyone's trying to make the friends and settle the scores necessary to survive it.

**Industrial Wasteland:** This district is not well-suited for actual human habitation. Massive zones of automated industrial machinery extract some necessary resource or manufacture some product, and the limited number of people needed to operate the machines live in well-delineated habitable zones. The rest of the area may be difficult or very dangerous to physically access.







**Lasting Scar:** Something went terribly wrong here in the past, and the district still hasn't recovered. Massive riots, a huge industrial accident, the wreckage of urban warfare, a natural disaster that smashed major structures, or some other calamity has left its mark. Locals have to either work around the remnants or somehow profit by looting them.

**Local Spirit:** The natives of the district are acutely aware of their origins and tend to band together to exclude outsiders. They may have deep local divides, but few wish to involve external forces, and they have as little to do with city officials and corp outsiders as possible. Only through extensive favors and contacts can this distance be removed.

**Lost Glory:** Things used to be better than they are now. Maybe the locals were richer, the location was more important, or the district had some critical function the rest of the city relied on. Those days are gone, now, and only remnants and relics of past success remain.

**Luxury Haven:** This district may have its bad spots, but at least some of it is dedicated to the golden serenity of extremely wealthy or important people in the city. In these enclaves, the streets are safe, the shops are all high-end, and the security is omnipresent. Getting in or out of these zones usually requires the right passes or connections.

**Malcontent Locals:** The district's locals have been a substantial annoyance to the city government and its ruling megacorps. Riots, sabotage, illicit broadcasts, and prohibited net usage are common here, with the natives either holding a bitter grudge against the city's rulers or finding it profitable to oppose them. Their leaders may be bankrolled by outside enemies of the city's rulers.

**Media Factory:** Entertainment is produced in this district, with a host of VR producers, video creators, "journalists", and other media types clustering in the area. Actors of every description hunt for their next role, and the local media corps grind them up monthly to make their necessary quota of corporate-approved media product.

**Old Capital:** This district was once the heart of the city, the center of its government and the headquarters of major powers. Some past event made the place unsuitable for that, but old government facilities and abandoned institutional structures still litter the place. Not everything of value was removed from these places at the time of the shift.

**Open Parkland:** A significant part of the district is an open park, with near-wilderness conditions in some of it due to long neglect and intentional dilapidation. The overgrown terrain makes it very easy to hide in the park, and numerous illicit enterprises have camps or delvings within its bounds.

**Orbital Link:** The district has or supports a spaceport. If your setting has orbital habitats, the rich and powerful flow through on their way to their heavenly palaces. If not, the spaceport may be launching satellites or industrial hardware for space resource exploitation. Numerous highly-educated workers live here, and exceedingly expensive hardware can be found here as well.

**Organleggers:** A number of very influential organ-legging rings operate out of the district, buying cyber and flesh from gangs throughout the city. Those who desperately need certain implants or surplus organs that can't be obtained legitimately can be found dealing with ring representatives here, as well as medical organizations who aren't picky about their sourcing.



**Outsider Enclave:** A significant chunk of this district is under the administration or control of an outside power, whether a rival city, neighboring nation, or outside corporation. It may be a remnant of a prior war, corporate takeover, city secessionists, or sheer governmental indifference. Laws inside the enclave may not match others in the city, and access in or out may hinge on diplomatic connections or useful smuggling ties.

**Painful Profits:** There's significant money to be made here in some trade that harms or kills its workers and the local inhabitants. A dangerous mine, a toxic factory complex, organized blood sport arenas, an old dump that can be scavenged, or some other site is both providing the bulk of the local paychecks and a good chunk of the fatalities as well.

**Religious Center:** There's a church, holy site, pilgrimage place, or venerated school here dedicated to a particular religion. Many of the locals are committed believers, and they have ties with fellow faithful outside the city. The secular authorities always have to keep the opinions of religious leaders in mind, and bribery or threats to them are not unknown.

**Restive Locals:** The district natives are in a ferment, liable to explode into riots or demonstrations at the slightest provocation. Some ongoing problem or determined agitator is whipping the locals up, and things can get explosively out of hand on short notice. Certain powers might be trying to take advantage of that.

**Restricted Access:** People are not allowed to enter or leave the district freely. The locals might be second-class citizens, they might be too important to risk outside intruders, or they might be too troublesome to risk letting them wander. Only those with the necessary passes and justified business are allowed in or out.

**Secessionists:** A portion of this district flatly refuses to recognize any outside authority. It may be too impoverished and useless to invite any opposition from the municipal government, or the local corps may have not finished deciding which of them should take it over. In the meanwhile, the locals may or may not have come together behind a single local government.

**Shifting Trait:** Roll twice on this table; the first trait is ending here, but whatever force or circumstance is ending it is also giving birth to the second trait. The old powers are unlikely to go quietly as the new influencers arrive.

**Smuggler's Den:** The district's economy relies heavily on illicit transport of goods, sliding them past corporate import taxes or monopolies. A maze of smuggler's tunnels likely honeycombs the place, and seaside districts will have myriad hidden docks for small boats and stealthed submersibles.

**Sweatshop Labor:** Factory work is rarely safe and decently-paid. Here, it's nominally worse than slave labor, because slaves expect to be fed. Some massive factory or other economic enterprise is eating up poor laborers, wringing what work they can from them before leaving them broken and discarded. Most hold out hopes of decent pay and advancement, making good on it only often enough to keep the dream alive.

**Tomb District:** Some recent military conflict, natural disaster, plague, or other catastrophe killed an enormous number of people here. Some abandoned structures may still be full of the dead, while mass graves, memorials, or catacombs might contain other corpses. Criminal groups find considerable use for these unpeopled places.

**Transport Nexus:** A major port, airport, cargo hub, or transfer station serves as a major employer in the district, and influences from far-distant cities are common. Numerous not-entirely-licit immigrants and strangers can be found here.

**Urban Maze:** The district's geography and architecture have made the place into a near-impenetrable maze of alleys, corridors, courtyards, and tenements. Without a local guide only the most well-known landmarks are accessible to outsiders, and it may be difficult to get vehicles bigger than a motorcycle into the area.

**Utility Lack:** Some critical public resource is very difficult to obtain in the district. The water supply may be limited, the power lines might not be accessible, or the public network may be down. Those who control access to these resources have power here, and much residential conflict involves obtaining these necessities.

**Vice Dens:** This district offers services too repugnant or degrading to be welcomed by its neighbors. Entire subcultures may have formed around facilitating sins that aren't even physically possible without VR headsets or specific cyber implants. Other citizens might despise this district, but they do enough business to draw large amounts of money here.

**Vital Resource:** The district provides some critical resource to the rest of the city. It may have the city desalinization plant, the primary power generation facility, or the core of the urban network. The most important locals are those in charge of this resource, and most of the rest make their living off of maintaining it or selling it to the rest of the city.



# CREATING MEGACORPS

Megacorps are the universal patrons, targets, antagonists, and loot sources of most cyberpunk games. Most have effectively unlimited money, unrestricted power within their own domains, and a profound indifference toward anything but their own advancement. It's a given that your campaign is going to need a decent selection of them to serve as mission targets, paymasters, and background movers.

These tables will give you the basic flavor of a megacorp, a style that might vary from branch to branch of a larger concern.

**Roll or pick a main corp focus.** While every megacorp has countless lesser subsidiaries and vassal-corps, this line of industry is their main focus and the primary source of their power and influence.

**Roll or pick one or more general corp styles.** Even a faceless multinational corporation has a particular way of doing things, and this style is how the operator community generally thinks of them. Note that the general public probably has no idea of this reality, being subject to corporate marketing and relentless positive media coverage. You can nuance a corp's general style by rolling two different flavors and blending them.

**Roll or pick a corp strength.** Every megacorp is incredibly powerful in the general sense, but this particular city's branch has a trump card they often use

in conflicts with other corporations or upstart civic governments.

**Roll or pick a recent corporate event.** This event has shaped the corporation's current goals and attitude, and they're still working out the long-term consequences of what happened. They may need to hire a number of operator teams to clean up all the loose ends involved in it.

**Roll or pick a current corp goal.** Megacorps have the morality of a cancer cell, and exist only to grow in strength and influence. Those that try to exist in any sort of stable equilibrium are quickly dispatched by more voracious competitors, so the survivors tend to be optimized for relentless growth. This goal is going to be the next step in their expansion, and may figure into a related Scheme.

**Roll or pick a corporate name.** The table here offers a mix of name elements and corporation titles. Faceless multinationals love portmanteaus in particular, mashing words together into an agglutinated spawn vaguely evocative of the original ideas. Heroic myths, amorphously general terms, and titles glorifying the controlling family are also popular name elements.

The results from these tables should be sufficient to characterize a corp in a particular district or town. If you need more variety for a different branch, rerolling events and goals for them can add additional texture.

| d20 | Main Corp Focus     | General Corp Style                                                                             |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Agriculture         | <b>Bloodless</b> , never reacting out of emotion but always focusing on profit                 |
| 2   | Biotech             | <b>Brutish</b> , relying on money and influence to force its products into success             |
| 3   | Computing           | <b>Bureaucratic</b> , operating on calcified principles and dull, unreflective rules           |
| 4   | Construction        | <b>Cultish</b> , cultivating a religious kind of isolating devotion in its employees           |
| 5   | Consumer Goods      | <b>Decaying</b> , blindly pursuing products and schemes that just aren't going to work         |
| 6   | Cyberware           | <b>Dwindling</b> , clinging to a product line or service that was once more profitable         |
| 7   | Data Brokering      | <b>Esoteric</b> , following an aesthetic or set of goals strange to outside observers          |
| 8   | Drugs               | <b>Fraudulent</b> , relying on political influence and force to sell its half-functional goods |
| 9   | Education           | <b>Hateful</b> , as it seems to be largely designed to do horrible things to non-customers     |
| 10  | Electronics         | <b>Haughty</b> , focusing only on the very top end of its market and product type              |
| 11  | Financial Services  | <b>Innovative</b> , coming up with daring new ideas and products despite the risks             |
| 12  | Heavy Industry      | <b>Murderous</b> , making precise and targeted use of violence against its problems            |
| 13  | Media/Entertainment | <b>Pandering</b> , acutely interested in good public relations regardless of its acts          |
| 14  | Medical             | <b>Personalized</b> , with individual managers having very personal control of branches        |
| 15  | Mining              | <b>Rapacious</b> , always trying to gobble up and assimilate smaller competitors               |
| 16  | Power generation    | <b>Reckless</b> , constantly making dangerous bets that may or may not pay off                 |
| 17  | Security Services   | <b>Spiteful</b> , willing to lose money to inflict punishment on its rivals and enemies        |
| 18  | Transport/Logistics | <b>Unreliable</b> , its products and tech prone to deniable but very real problems             |
| 19  | Vehicles/Aerospace  | <b>Vengeful</b> , unusually inclined to punish those who trouble it, even if unprofitable      |
| 20  | Weaponry            | <b>Vicious</b> , always preferring loudly overt bloodshed and violence when practical          |

**d20 Particular Corp Strengths**

- 1 They're even richer than most corps
- 2 They have very well-trained security
- 3 Their low-level staff are zealously loyal
- 4 They have useful religious or ethnic ties
- 5 They have the best products of one type
- 6 They have a respected reputation
- 7 They have a stable of elite operatives
- 8 Their information tech is superb
- 9 They have plants among many rivals
- 10 Their schemes are unusually effective
- 11 Other corps are reluctant to touch them
- 12 The local government has strong ties
- 13 Their products are cheap but effective
- 14 They're viewed as protectors by a group
- 15 They have access to special technology
- 16 They have a vast web of spies in the city
- 17 Their military forces are surprisingly strong
- 18 They have absolute rule over an area
- 19 They largely control an illegal good
- 20 They're just inexplicably lucky

**d20 Current Corp Goals**

- 1 Smash a particular rival corporation
- 2 Research a revolutionary new tech
- 3 Acquire a new raw material source
- 4 Subvert an annoying government
- 5 Monopolize a particular product type
- 6 Inflict a PR disaster on a rival
- 7 Stave off financial disaster with profits
- 8 Open a new branch in a hostile area
- 9 Acquire more tangible military power
- 10 Forge a new retail channel in an area
- 11 Force open a currently-closed market
- 12 Back a useful group of terrorists
- 13 Spread a particular corp-serving ideal
- 14 Steal a vital secret from another corp
- 15 Plant a mole in another corp's C-suite
- 16 Frame a rival for an impending disaster
- 17 Ruthlessly exploit a resource source
- 18 Crush annoying labor troubles
- 19 Defame a competing product line
- 20 Sabotage a rival's current goal

**d20 Recent Corporate Events**

- 1 It's losing money with its current products
- 2 Its execs are trying to kill each other
- 3 The CEO is failing or losing control
- 4 It has serious problems with the local gov
- 5 It earned a miserable public reputation
- 6 It over-extended itself into new markets
- 7 It committed a barely-deniable atrocity
- 8 A product recently backfired direly
- 9 It's under attack by a strong rival
- 10 It was driven out of a market recently
- 11 It crushed almost all its direct competition
- 12 It formed special ties with the government
- 13 It spun off a major subsidiary corp
- 14 Its CEO died or was forced out
- 15 It made a great tech breakthrough
- 16 A civil war broke out among its branches
- 17 It obtained effective rule of an area
- 18 It backed a successful rebel government
- 19 It shut down a vital local industry
- 20 It conducted a PR blitz on the city

**d20 Name Element Corp Element**

- |    |                      |               |
|----|----------------------|---------------|
| 1  | Animal name          | Associates    |
| 2  | Appealing adjective  | Bank          |
| 3  | City name            | Bureau        |
| 4  | Color name           | Combine       |
| 5  | Family name          | Community     |
| 6  | Foreign place name   | Corp          |
| 7  | Local place name     | GmbH          |
| 8  | Mythic figure or god | Guild         |
| 9  | Name of its industry | Incorporated  |
| 10 | Nation name          | Industries    |
| 11 | Natural disaster     | International |
| 12 | Natural feature name | LLC           |
| 13 | Natural phenomenon   | Ltd.          |
| 14 | Number               | Products      |
| 15 | Political group name | Sciences      |
| 16 | Portmanteau          | Services      |
| 17 | Product it sells     | Technologies  |
| 18 | Religious term       | Union         |
| 19 | River name           | Unity         |
| 20 | Type of service      | Universal     |



## CREATING GANGS

For a GM, gangs have a few basic purposes. They provide easily-explained violent rabble for guarding slum sites, they're convenient antagonists who are always trying to push their current limits, and they're morally-flexible employers for operators who aren't picky.

In practice, gangs form the ruling class of the slum zones and other unpoliced areas of the city. The locals can't live without some order, and as the non-aggression principle lasts only until the Eighth Street Horde can put their hands on automatic weaponry, the Eighth Street Horde is now the law.

The violence, intrigue, and treachery between rival gangs would be immediately recognizable to a feudal lord, with the gangers in full harness sometimes visually identical in turn. With the city only bothering to show up when the gangs seem to threaten outright secession, the disagreements between groups are settled by way of very vigorous dialogue. To form one of these petty princedoms, follow the steps below.

Roll or pick a main income. While most gangs are flexible, this is how they make most of their money. Gangs with primary incomes that don't relate to turf control, like hacking or fraud, can often coexist "peacefully" with another gang in the area so long as they make their tribute payments on time and don't get in their "protector's" way.

Roll or pick one or more styles. Gangs have a style and reputation, and you need to know how they generally go about doing things. Blend multiple styles if you want more variety.

Roll or pick gang strengths. This is why they've had the success they have so far, and why they have ambitions for more.

Roll or pick recent gang events. At least one major event has probably shaped the gang's current situation, and should be reflected in their present major goal.

Roll or pick that goal. Gangs are perpetually in motion; one that isn't trying to get bigger or stronger is going to inevitably dwindle in influence. There are always outside competitors looking to take over a chunk of a gang's income, or internal malcontents looking for a quick way up in the ranks. Goals can be as much about pacifying internal dissenters as actually expanding the gang's turf and influence.

Roll or pick a gang name. The table provides a list of suggested name motifs and a noun suitable for tying them together. You can roll or pick as desired to mix the elements together as your tastes prefer; a yakuza-flavored street gang might be the Kawamichi Association after their boss, while a local neighborhood clique might be dubbed the Westport Boys in honor of their home district.

| d20 | Main Gang Income  | General Gang Style                                                                          |
|-----|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Assassinations    | <b>Bestial</b> , favoring an almost feral degree of violence and destruction                |
| 2   | Black marketing   | <b>Chromed</b> , heavily invested in not-always-safe-or-reliable cyberware                  |
| 3   | Blackmail         | <b>Corporate</b> , with tight discipline and an interest only in the bottom line            |
| 4   | City gov lobbying | <b>Degenerate</b> , favoring self-destructive enjoyments and decadent indulgences           |
| 5   | Corp hirelings    | <b>Doctrinaire</b> , obsessed with an ideology or Great Cause despite all obstacles         |
| 6   | Cyber trade       | <b>Familial</b> , with personal ties of blood between most members and all leaders          |
| 7   | Drug production   | <b>Flamboyant</b> , loving style and display over practicality                              |
| 8   | Drug retail       | <b>Greedy</b> , pushing for more turf and money despite the obvious risks involved          |
| 9   | Extortion         | <b>Idealistic</b> , pretending to a noble cause despite the grubby reality                  |
| 10  | Fraud             | <b>Nationalist</b> , supporting a particular nation, ethnicity, or group                    |
| 11  | Hacking           | <b>Nihilistic</b> , caring for nothing very much, even their own lives                      |
| 12  | Horrible vices    | <b>Pious</b> , devoted to a particular fringe religion or cult                              |
| 13  | Human Trafficking | <b>Pretentious</b> , overtly seeing themselves as their turf's government and lawful rulers |
| 14  | Merc work         | <b>Sadistic</b> , preferring lingering pain and horror over quick violence                  |
| 15  | Organlegging      | <b>Sanctioned</b> , operating with the tacit support and approval of city government        |
| 16  | Petty theft       | <b>Swarming</b> , favoring masses of low-level gangers over fewer, more elite members       |
| 17  | Prostitution      | <b>Technical</b> , preferring high-tech tools and expertise                                 |
| 18  | Slave labor       | <b>Terrifying</b> , focusing on intimidating and cowing all possible foes with raw terror   |
| 19  | Smuggling         | <b>Themed</b> , devoted to a particular visual or aesthetic theme at all costs              |
| 20  | VR production     | <b>Wretched</b> , impoverished and desperate to attain even basic necessities               |

**d20 Particular Gang Strengths**

- |    |                                            |
|----|--------------------------------------------|
| 1  | They have an elite of cybered pros         |
| 2  | They have close ties with city government  |
| 3  | A local corp is secretly backing them      |
| 4  | The locals genuinely support them          |
| 5  | Their leadership is extremely competent    |
| 6  | They have strong gang alliances            |
| 7  | They have a fearsome reputation            |
| 8  | They have ties outside the city            |
| 9  | They know secret places in the district    |
| 10 | They have excellent gear and weapons       |
| 11 | They provide a critical district service   |
| 12 | A local group views them as protectors     |
| 13 | They're unusually wealthy                  |
| 14 | They're very selective in their membership |
| 15 | They have a monopoly on something          |
| 16 | They have critical blackmail info          |
| 17 | They have celebrity members                |
| 18 | They have a powerful local patron          |
| 19 | They have a web of spies in the area       |
| 20 | They're inexplicably lucky                 |

**d20 Current Gang Goals**

- |    |                                          |
|----|------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Wipe out a competitor for their turf     |
| 2  | Expand into an under-defended area       |
| 3  | Avenge some slight by another group      |
| 4  | Cyber up their enforcers with big iron   |
| 5  | Make an alliance with another gang       |
| 6  | Persuade a corp to recruit their aid     |
| 7  | Crush a bothersome local resister        |
| 8  | Recruit more useful talent               |
| 9  | Take over a local vice trade             |
| 10 | Fence an extremely hot item of value     |
| 11 | Regroup after some recent reversal       |
| 12 | Resolve a serious leadership conflict    |
| 13 | Start up a profitable front business     |
| 14 | Make inroads in a new profitable crime   |
| 15 | Intimidate the locals with some atrocity |
| 16 | Evade a local police crackdown           |
| 17 | Fight off an incursion by another gang   |
| 18 | Recover a stolen stash or goods          |
| 19 | Tighten their grip on their current turf |
| 20 | Forge a useful new public impression     |

**d20 Recent Gang Events**

- |    |                                              |
|----|----------------------------------------------|
| 1  | The former leader was recently killed        |
| 2  | A splinter group split off from the gang     |
| 3  | The cops cracked down on the gang            |
| 4  | A corp hired them for some dirty work        |
| 5  | They badly lost a fight with another group   |
| 6  | They conducted some local terrorism          |
| 7  | They stole something very valuable           |
| 8  | They got caught in two other gangs' fight    |
| 9  | A valuable business began on their turf      |
| 10 | Their favorite income was squeezed           |
| 11 | A gang lieutenant turned traitor             |
| 12 | The gang changed their crime focus           |
| 13 | They moved their headquarters                |
| 14 | They actually did some legit work            |
| 15 | They crushed a rival in a bloody clash       |
| 16 | They acquired members with a rare skill      |
| 17 | They came into a large cash windfall         |
| 18 | They got a lot of loot they can't really use |
| 19 | They recently fell into dire poverty         |
| 20 | They acquired a powerful gov patron          |

**d20 Name Element Gang Element**

- |    |                        |              |
|----|------------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Street name            | Army         |
| 2  | Color                  | Association  |
| 3  | Violent action         | Boys/Girls   |
| 4  | Animal                 | Brotherhood  |
| 5  | Direction              | Clan         |
| 6  | Fashion item           | Clique       |
| 7  | Leader's name          | Company      |
| 8  | Religious figure       | Crew         |
| 9  | Geographic location    | Gang         |
| 10 | District name          | Horde        |
| 11 | Important date         | Mob          |
| 12 | Drug name              | Organization |
| 13 | Building name          | Outfit       |
| 14 | Nation name            | Pack         |
| 15 | Physical trait         | Posse        |
| 16 | Favorite cyber         | Ring         |
| 17 | Intimidating adjective | Set          |
| 18 | Weapon                 | Society      |
| 19 | Barbarous habit        | Squad        |
| 20 | The gang's mission     | Syndicate    |

# CREATING NPCs

Every GM needs a supply of non-player characters, the rank and file of patrons, antagonists, and bystanders for your adventures. While an NPC's physical appearance and mannerisms can have meaning in play, a GM most often needs to know what an NPC can do, what they want, and how they're likely to respond to the PCs. The tables on this spread provide a few tools for resolving those questions.

**Pick a name.** Conveniently enough, there are several thousand backer names listed in the back of this book. You can mix and match as needed to get a name for your NPC.

**Roll or pick a strength.** This is what the NPC is good at, or the ability they have that makes them capable of helping or harming the PCs. The magnitude of this strength should be adjusted based on the NPC's importance. A crime boss with the *Gear* strength might have part-ownership in a megacorp subsidiary that produces high-tech equipment for his minions. A petty gang lieutenant might just have some exceptionally nice cyberware.

**Roll or pick a virtue.** All but the most heinous NPCs have something praiseworthy about their character, and this trait is something important to the NPC and influential in how they deal with their problems or the people they encounter.

**Roll or pick a flaw.** Just as a villain can have a grace, even a noble-hearted NPC probably has a weak point. The magnitude of this is likely to flex based on how generally reprehensible the NPC is; a vicious organlegger's fits of violent anger may result in regular dismemberments, while an otherwise-benign cyberdoc might just say things he'll later regret.

**Roll or pick a problem.** This is the immediate issue that most concerns the NPC, and it's likely one of the easiest ways for PCs to get a handle on them. They may want help in resolving the problem, or they may see the PCs as a way to deal with the issue, whether or not the PCs want to be that solution.

**Roll or pick a desire.** While a problem is something they want to get away from, a desire is something they want to get closer to. If the PCs can't solve their problem, they might still be able to move the NPC by appealing to their desires.

Remember that these rolls are likely tied together in their results. A person's problems often directly result from their personality flaws, and the virtues or qualities they're set on are probably the way they're trying to approach their desires. The gang lieutenant who's good to his subordinates might be doing so because their loyalty is the best ticket toward eventually deposing his boss.

d20

## The NPC's Main Strength

|    |                                                                                                  |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Charm</b> , able to persuade other NPCs and people with their winning ways                    |
| 2  | <b>Cunning</b> , having plans for any occasion and a backup after that                           |
| 3  | <b>Debts</b> , being owed favors by one or more important other people                           |
| 4  | <b>Deception</b> , capable of tricking and misleading others easily                              |
| 5  | <b>Fame</b> , being known and widely respected in their own social circles                       |
| 6  | <b>Family</b> , related to someone of greater importance or influence                            |
| 7  | <b>Foresight</b> , able to clearly predict the likely outcomes of current situations             |
| 8  | <b>Friendship</b> , being good friends with someone important or powerful                        |
| 9  | <b>Gear</b> , possessed of high-quality cyber, weaponry, drones, or other useful equipment       |
| 10 | <b>Inspiration</b> , able to goad others to pursue a shared goal as if it were their own         |
| 11 | <b>Luck</b> , beyond any ordinary measure to a very noticeable degree                            |
| 12 | <b>Money</b> , being unusually wealthy for someone in their position                             |
| 13 | <b>Prowess</b> , with their physical form somehow dramatically stronger and tougher than most    |
| 14 | <b>Secrets</b> , privy to blackmail information or valuable knowledge hidden from most           |
| 15 | <b>Skills</b> , possessed of a rare or important skill to an unusual degree                      |
| 16 | <b>Stealth</b> , very difficult to locate or follow if they don't care to be pursued             |
| 17 | <b>Ties</b> , linked professionally to an organization or group that is very dangerous to offend |
| 18 | <b>Violence</b> , either being personally fearsome or having ties to those who are               |
| 19 | <b>Willpower</b> , driven to obtain their aim with tireless, ferocious determination             |
| 20 | <b>Wisdom</b> , able to discern a practical path to their desires even when all is murky         |



**d20 Notable NPC Virtues or Qualities**

- 1 Always keeps the spirit of their bargains
- 2 Avoids lying in all but dire circumstances
- 3 Cherishes an idealistic dream
- 4 Courage of unusual degree
- 5 Devoted to their family
- 6 Exceptionally kind to the weak
- 7 Extremely fastidious about their duties
- 8 Extremely trustworthy to friends
- 9 Forgiving temperament, even if unwise
- 10 Generous even when it is difficult
- 11 Has an excellent sense of humor
- 12 Hates underhanded schemes and plots
- 13 Incorrupt about their given responsibilities
- 14 Is a good, trustworthy leader to minions
- 15 Keeps calm even under intense pressure
- 16 Loyal subordinate to their chosen leader
- 17 Never backs down from a promise
- 18 Patient when taxed or annoyed
- 19 Self-sacrificing for what they believe in
- 20 Thoughtful and not given to quick anger

**d20 Current NPC Problems**

- 1 A family member or friend has a problem
- 2 A subordinate wants their job
- 3 Their kids are doing something stupid
- 4 Their spouse or partner is furious
- 5 Their superior is very displeased with them
- 6 They botched their last responsibility
- 7 They hate their current job or boss
- 8 They need rare or costly medical aid
- 9 They owe more than they can pay
- 10 They're being blackmailed or coerced
- 11 They're being pursued by a dire nemesis
- 12 They're in dire need of money
- 13 They're stifled and bored in their job
- 14 They're struggling with mental trauma
- 15 They've been given a job too big for them
- 16 They've earned a dangerous foe
- 17 They've gotten addicted to something
- 18 They've inherited someone else's problem
- 19 They've lost or had stolen a vital thing
- 20 They've made promises they can't keep

**d20 NPC Personality Flaws**

- 1 Accepts bribes or considerations
- 2 Addicted to a drug or indulgence
- 3 Blames their failures on something else
- 4 Careless and sloppy with their duties
- 5 Easily breaks promises to others
- 6 Easily led astray by a pretty face
- 7 Exceptionally greedy despite its dangers
- 8 Has fits of violent anger
- 9 Irrational hatred for a class or type
- 10 Leaves a trail of mistreated lovers
- 11 Lies even when it's not terribly useful
- 12 Militantly unfaithful to their partner
- 13 Obsessed with a very expensive pastime
- 14 Promises far more than they actually do
- 15 Prone to betraying unprofitable causes
- 16 Prone to fits of cowardice
- 17 Reckless desire for fame and glory
- 18 Spendthrift prone to getting into debt
- 19 Steals even when it's not very convenient
- 20 Thoughtless with those closest to them

**d20 Current NPC Desires**

- 1 They want an appealing new lover
- 2 They want more leisure time to themselves
- 3 They want more money
- 4 They want respect and admiration
- 5 They want to acquire a different job
- 6 They want to boost a friend's career
- 7 They want to carry out a secret command
- 8 They want to depose their boss
- 9 They want to earn forgiveness
- 10 They want to escape their past choices
- 11 They want to harm an enemy organization
- 12 They want to indulge in pleasures
- 13 They want to kill some enemy
- 14 They want to leave their current life
- 15 They want to live in a different place
- 16 They want to obtain a particular item
- 17 They want to prove themselves to others
- 18 They want to pursue a tempting secret
- 19 They want to rescue someone from trouble
- 20 They want to take revenge on a foe

# CREATING AND RUNNING MISSIONS

Now that you've built your setting or chosen a pre-existing one to play in, it's time to start creating the missions that your operators will be undertaking.

This section provides a step-by-step sequence for designing your campaign missions in a way that helps you propel your city's background events and lets your players make a meaningful difference in how events there play out. It's assumed that you're running a sandbox-style campaign, so tools are provided for handling actions and movement in the campaign's background, along with the actions of other players in the city.

Along with these tools, advice is provided on how to handle common issues in play and problems a GM might face when creating and running their missions. While much of a GM's job can be broken down into straightforward procedures and formulas, a certain degree of human flexibility is necessary if they are to manage an unruly group of criminal malcontents.

The first step in getting your campaign going is going to consist of creating the first mission for your group.

## WHAT IS A MISSION?

For the purposes of this section a *mission* is simply one particular adventure, hired job, dire situation, or other play content that should provide at least one evening's entertainment. The PCs may or may not be getting paid for it, but it'll keep them occupied and amused.

*It is the party's job to take missions.* They need to either bite on a hook that the GM has prepared for them or plan out their own sorties against the megacorps, rival gangs, obnoxious rivals, or other targets. Staying at home to run VR sims and argue about guns on the local operator forums is not a valid choice for play time; they can do that sort of thing offscreen during downtime.

*It is the GM's job to create missions the PCs would actually take.* Not every job needs to be tailored to the foibles of the team, but if a mission is one you know the players would never be interested in, it doesn't count as an option. Missions should somehow relate to the ambitions and goals of the operators, even if that ambition is simply to become very wealthy.

Thus, it is the team's job to show up ready to play, and it is the GM's job to have something ready for them. This section will provide one possible way for GMs to create missions. It is not the only way, and may not even be the best way for a particular GM, but it can be relied upon to give you something playable if you follow it step by step.

## THE GM PREP SEQUENCE

With your campaign setting in mind, you're going to go through the following procedure to create your missions. Once you're familiar with it, you can start riffing on the steps and making your own adjustments.

1. **Create at least five Schemes** related to five different groups in the team's starting District, as explained in the following pages.
2. **Create a mission hook related to each Scheme** using the tools on page 142.
3. **For your very first game session, create a simple, one-session introductory mission** to pull the PCs together and get them familiar with the setting. At the end of the evening's play, have their fixers or word on the street present them with the mission hooks you just created.
4. **Let the PCs choose**, either one of those mission hooks or a job they've made up on their own.
5. **During the downtime before the next play session, turn the mission hook they chose into a full-fledged mission**, doing any prep you require for it as explained on page 142.
6. **Pick at least one of the mission hooks they didn't choose** and either drop it as unfulfilled or use the table on page 140 to see if an NPC operator group was able to accomplish it. Depending on the result, modify any Schemes related to it.
7. **Generate fresh mission hooks** to replace the ones you just dropped or the NPCs resolved.
8. **Run the next game session.** At the end of the mission, let your fixers present the PCs with the currently-available mission hooks, including the ones you just generated in the prior step.
9. **Let the PCs pick one of the hooks** or decide to do their own thing. Go back to step 5 and repeat.

With this prep sequence, you are constantly staying one game session ahead of the players. Don't try to prep further ahead than that, as the events of a single session's play can so drastically change the situation that the PCs might have to completely abandon a line of activity before the next evening's gaming. Ultimately, you only ever have to have enough content ready to keep them entertained for the next session of play, so don't burn yourself out with extra labor.

# CREATING SCHEMES

Your city needs motion and your game nights need adventure hooks. Schemes are a mechanism to help you provide a sense of independent activity to your city while giving you some convenient hooks for generating missions and handling independent PC exploits.

A **Scheme** is simply a plot, plan, ambition, or organized goal for a particular faction in a district, city, or nation. If the group manages to hit the necessary milestones in the Scheme, their grand plot will come to fruition and something good (for them) will happen. Schemes may be obvious to outside observers, or they might be hidden plots that can't be fully understood without careful infiltration and spycraft.

Schemes are measured by **progress points**. A fresh plot has 1 point of progress. A minor goal might come to fruition at 10 progress points, while a major plot might take 20, and a vast conspiracy might need 30, 40, or even 50 progress points to fully work its dark purpose.

Most missions and jobs are associated with these Schemes, and will advance them or push them back by so many progress points. A given mission might do both, advancing one Scheme at the cost of another rival plot. Minor missions will make little difference, while major feats will move more progress points.

Schemes can be utterly destroyed by smashing whatever force was driving them. A particular corp executive officer, a charismatic community leader, or a particular gang boss might be the critical point at which a Scheme's plots come together, and successfully killing or diverting them might be enough to ruin the plan entirely. If this is done without discrediting the idea beforehand, however, the prime mover's superiors or ambitious underlings might just pick the Scheme back up with a new face at the lead.

Schemes can also be crushed by running the kind of missions that would logically spoil the plan. If a megacorp has a secret facility devoted to developing a brain-controlling cyber implant, a team that goes in and murders the entire technical staff while irrevocably wiping the main server might end up trashing the entire project in one swift stroke. Of course, such all-or-nothing missions tend to be much more dangerous than trying to bring a plot down by subtler methods.

For the GM, the purpose of Schemes is to give motion to a city and make an operator team's choice of missions more meaningful. Working for a villainous megacorp means advancing their agenda in the city, but even the most idealistic team might decide that it's the lesser of two evils if their mission happens to involve hitting an even worse target. The vastly superior pay that the corps offer might also be necessary if the team is going to be able to afford to work for free for more deserving clients; cyberware maintenance and life-saving surgery don't come cheap.

## CREATING YOUR SCHEMES

Schemes exist at three different levels: district, city, and region. District Schemes are fairly local plots and plans that are likely only going to have a major effect on a single district. City Schemes can be expected to affect the entire city with their results, while regional Schemes are going to matter to the entire region or nation that the events occur in. Indeed, particularly large regional Schemes might affect the entire world.

For the beginning of your campaign, you only need to worry about district Schemes. As the PCs grow in power and influence, and as more districts start to matter to them, you can start rolling up city-level Schemes to serve as a backdrop, and eventually you might need to worry about regional Schemes. If you're feeling particularly energetic, you can do this even at the start of a campaign, but don't spend that creative energy until after you've got your district Schemes set up properly.

Begin by counting out the major players in a district. From your world creation, you should already have two megacorps and at least one gang active in the district. You can usually add in the local city government, along with a community leader representative of the local natives. That leaves you with at least five groups who could be responsible for Schemes, possibly more if you decide to throw in more major actors in the district.

You don't have to make up Schemes for all of these groups. Maybe they're absorbed in their own affairs right now, or too busy cleaning up a prior mess, or just not focused enough to have any big plans going on. You should, however, make up at least five Schemes: one for the community, one for the local government, and at least three between gangs, megacorps, and major local NPCs. This spread of Schemes is enough to give most operator teams a good variety of choices in the kind of patrons they want to work for and the kind of outcomes they're willing to accept.

For each district Scheme, pick one of the templates given here. Each lists a certain number of progression points, various milestones that need to be accomplished to get there, and a final crowning achievement. The following pages include tables for possible milestones and ultimate goals, or you can pick your own to fit the details of your particular district and its inhabitants. As always, you can stretch out or squash progress point requirements, or tack on extra milestones if you see fit.

Start by rolling or picking the Scheme's ultimate goal. Knowing where this plan is supposed to end up will help you make sense of its earlier stages. Once you've decided what grand purpose the plot is supposed to serve, work backward, generating or picking





milestones as you go. Once you have them all, look at them and come up with some suitably baroque story to explain why each milestone is necessary in order to reach the next stage.

When you create this story, work in the facts of the district, including its traits and major players. If you need enemies, pick local enemies. If you need problems, pick local problems. Don't hesitate to weave Schemes together; maybe the problem to be solved in one Scheme is the keystone of a different group's Scheme. If you've already generated Schemes for other districts, you might tie them in at a point or two. The point of this stage is to make sure that the Schemes have something to do with the place they happen in, rather than being a free-floating cyberpunk situation that could be settled anywhere.

## MISSIONS AND SCHEMES

At the start of your campaign, use the mission creation tools in this section to build one mission hook for each Scheme. You don't need to flesh this out into a full mission, you just need to have enough information about for a fixer to pitch it as a job to the PCs.

When you create your campaign introductory adventure, the first session's events that are meant to pull the PCs together and get them familiar with the setting, these mission hooks will be presented to them at the end of the evening's play. The PCs will need to pick a job or decide to create their own. You'll then spend the downtime between sessions fleshing out whatever choice they made and turning it into a full-fledged mission that you can run next time you play. As always, the key is to stay one session ahead of the PCs; so long as you have enough content to keep them occupied for the next gaming session, you have all the content you really need.

Missions normally have an effect on related Schemes. A supportive mission might move things forward by 1 point if it's a very easy job, while a risky and perilous undertaking for real professionals might add 5 points, and an impossible exploit for the greatest operatives in the city might add 10. In the same vein, a mission that strikes directly against a rival group might do harm to their Scheme, applying a similar or smaller penalty to its progress.

Schemes can actually be brought down below 1 progress point by mission results, even reaching negative numbers to represent a Scheme that's so far behind that it needs help even to get to the starting line. If the situation is particularly bleak, the GM might decide that the organization behind it gives up on it as a bad job, and starts up a new Scheme with a different end.

Not every mission has to relate to a scheme. Sometimes a job comes up that has no connection to anything but the patron's pocketbook. If you want to throw in a mission hook here and there that has no greater patron than a particularly wealthy NPC, it's fine to leave it unattached to a Scheme.

### PP Petty Local Scheme Template

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 1  | Start of the scheme |
| 5  | Milestone           |
| 10 | Final Goal          |

### PP District Scheme Template

|    |                      |
|----|----------------------|
| 1  | Start of the scheme. |
| 5  | Milestone            |
| 10 | Milestone            |
| 15 | Milestone            |
| 20 | Final Goal           |

### PP City Scheme Template

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 1  | Start of the scheme |
| 5  | Milestone           |
| 10 | Milestone           |
| 15 | Instrumental Goal   |
| 20 | Milestone           |
| 25 | Milestone           |
| 30 | Final Goal          |

### PP Regional Scheme Template

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| 1  | Start of the scheme |
| 5  | Milestone           |
| 10 | Milestone           |
| 15 | Milestone           |
| 20 | Instrumental Goal   |
| 25 | Milestone           |
| 30 | Milestone           |
| 35 | Instrumental Goal   |
| 40 | Milestone           |
| 50 | Final Goal          |

## SCHEME GOALS

Every Scheme needs one or more *milestones*, particular accomplishments that need to be achieved to reach the final goal. In the same fashion, the Scheme needs one or more *goals*, the actual attainment that is sought.

When building a Scheme, you always start from the final goal and work backwards. If you know the ultimate purpose of all this chicanery, it's much easier to fit earlier stages in the plan into a grand plot. These tables will give you some basic ideas and concepts, but you'll need to dress them up in the specifics of your setting, accounting for the group or person behind them and the local facts that will shape them.

Begin by generating the Scheme's final goal. This is the ultimate benefit that success at the plot will grant to the plotter. The table below offers some general ideas you can roll or pick from.

You should scale the specifics of the goal to the magnitude of the Scheme. If you're making a Scheme for a small-time local gang boss, *Adapt To A Problem* just means that her gang now has tools or connections to no longer be bothered by an otherwise problematic district fact. If you're making a regional-scale Scheme backed by a megacorp, it might mean a complete upending of the regional power structure as the megacorp somehow takes advantage of a regional problem to become stronger than before.

| d20 | Scheme Goal Examples      |
|-----|---------------------------|
| 1   | Adapt To A Problem        |
| 2   | Drive Out a Rival         |
| 3   | Avenge a Defeat           |
| 4   | Change the Rules          |
| 5   | Enrich the Membership     |
| 6   | Discover a Secret         |
| 7   | Build Physical Force      |
| 8   | Change Their Image        |
| 9   | Subvert a Rival           |
| 10  | Save a Person             |
| 11  | Create a Product          |
| 12  | Clean Up a Mess           |
| 13  | Enthroned a Leader        |
| 14  | Make a Profit             |
| 15  | Claim Territory           |
| 16  | Make an Example           |
| 17  | Form an Alliance          |
| 18  | Break Free from Another   |
| 19  | Subvert the Government    |
| 20  | Increase their Membership |

### GOAL EXAMPLES

These goals are merely some of the possibilities that could be pursued. Some template goals are "instrumental". These goals benefit the plotter when they're attained, but their ultimate purpose is to make possible the "final goal" of a Scheme.

**Adapt To A Problem:** Adjust their situation, resources, or contacts so that a local problem is no longer a problem for them, and in fact may somehow make them stronger or more secure.

**Drive Out a Rival:** Force a group that's competing with them to leave the area, either by buyouts, force, external alliances, or treachery from suborned members.

**Avenge a Defeat:** Get revenge on some person or group that caused them severe problems in the past. This may involve straight-up assassination or be an assault on their financial holdings, local influence, or public respect.

**Change the Rules:** Alter the local laws or conventions so that something that would be very profitable for them is now accepted, whether as an overtly legal activity or a tacitly allowed one.

**Enrich the Membership:** Make life substantially better for members of the group or followers of the schemer, through additional income, more public influence, or a generally more comfortable life. Many small local organizations might strive for this; few succeed.

**Discover a Secret:** Pry some valuable secret out of a rival or extract it from an unwilling world. This secret might be blackmail, a vital product development element, secret marketing plans, a hidden but vulnerable relationship, or some other fact that would be very profitable or helpful for the schemer.

**Build Physical Force:** Acquire or upgrade the physical force available to the organization in the area. A district-level plot by a gang might involve forcibly enlisting a lesser gang of violent thugs into their service, while a regional-level megacorp plot might result in a nation granting open license for the development of corp military assets in its territory.

**Change Their Image:** Market or persuade the public into believing that the group or person behind the plot is what they say they are. This goal might involve moving the public sentiment in a particular direction, dissuading governmental authorities from interfering with such a popular group, or concealing widely-suspected crimes or atrocities.



**Subvert a Rival:** Bend a local rival or competitor into somehow cooperating with the schemer's own purposes. This may be a matter of bribing them to cooperate, tricking them into thinking their goals align, or subverting members inside the organization until they're willing to betray their original superiors.

**Save a Person:** Someone the organization cares about deeply is going to die unless this plot is successful, such as a lover, CEO, important political patron, or other person. They may be marked by irresistible forces of violence, prey to some exotic sickness or cancer, or condemned by their superiors to suffer death due to their failures or mistakes. This plot is designed to somehow save them from these consequences.

**Create a Product:** The plot means to overcome the difficulties in creating a revolutionary new product, be it a high-tech drone, new street drug, irresistible new religious cult, or manufactured music group. Particular industrial secrets, marketing ties, or rival products might need to be sorted out to successfully launch the product.

**Clean Up a Mess:** The schemer made a terrible mistake or had a dire failure. They're containing the situation for now, but if this plot doesn't come off correctly, it's going to spill out and make a mess for them that might get them ruined or killed. If successful, this plot will resolve the disagreement, hide the evidence, or silence the witnesses.

**Enthroned a Leader:** The schemer needs to put a particular person in charge of a group, corp branch, government office, or other organization of importance. The current leadership may not be interested in being replaced, so it may be necessary to make a few job openings and ensure rival candidates aren't an issue.

**Make a Profit:** This plot is simply about making a huge amount of money via a sale, agreement, alliance, or service rendered. If it's carried off successfully the schemer can expect to be greatly enriched by the profits.

**Claim Territory:** The plot is intended to take practical control of a particular area, making the plotter the de facto ruler of the place and neutralize the influence of other outside powers. The type of control is likely to depend on the nature of the plotter; a gang is probably interested in controlling the protection payments and use of violence in an area, while a megacorp might seek to systematically quash the retail outlets and government contracts of rivals in a zone.

**Make an Example:** Some rival needs to be very obviously and brutally punished for a prior trespass. It must be extremely clear that the plotter is behind the chastisement, and the harm done must be very public. Open violence might be involved, or corporate ruin, public condemnation, or some other form of destruction.

**Form an Alliance:** A pact of cooperation needs to be cemented between the plotter and some other power that can give them something they want. The plotter needs to bring something valuable to the partner, or else subvert its personnel with their own particular inducements.

**Break Free from Another:** The plotter is somehow subordinated or strongly influenced by another group or person, and they want to cut these ties without ending up ruined. The superior may need to be bought off, fought off, or discouraged from trying to exert control over the schemer. The schemer might actually be part of the target organization, and seeking to break off to form a splinter group.

**Subvert the Government:** Life would be much easier if the local government were more sympathetic to the plotter's interests. They need to bend local functionaries, put their own people into government, or weaken the official control of the area enough to have their own way in matters.

**Increase their Membership:** The plotter needs more people allied with their interests, so they need to recruit more people capable of helping them. This may involve absorbing rival groups, bribing competitors into submission, or forging an image so attractive that new blood wants to join. Their target may be a specific other organization to assimilate or it may be a broad appeal.



## SCHEME MILESTONES

Once you know what the final and intermediate goals of a Scheme are, you can fill in the milestones along the way. The tables here offer suggestions related to particular NPCs, general project resources, and business activities that might need to be accomplished.

Working backward from the end goal, roll or pick a milestone to fit into each earlier slot. Once all are in place, come up with some plot that hits each of the milestones you picked on its way to your ultimate goal.

For example, if you have a petty Scheme hatched by a local fixer who wants to *Build Physical Force*, you might roll "Force the government to back off from the plot." as the single milestone for the plot. You stop and think about the ways in which the government might be stopping the fixer from recruiting a large amount of muscle, and decide that the fixer had close ties to an exceptionally brutal gang of cyberfreaks until district law enforcement starting coming down heavy on them for their atrocities. The fixer needs to get the local cops to back off the gang, while holding further enforcement as a threat over their heads.

Thus, missions related to this milestone will probably involve doing favors for the local cops or threatening officials until the police back away. Only then does the fixer have to tame a perhaps-uncooperative gang leadership to get his pack of pet razors.

| d20 | NPC-Related Milestones                       |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Blackmail or extort someone.                 |
| 2   | Break up someone's relationship.             |
| 3   | Bribe or corruptly induce someone to help.   |
| 4   | Force someone to cut ties with someone.      |
| 5   | Force someone to work for them.              |
| 6   | Frame someone for a crime.                   |
| 7   | Get someone demoted or fired.                |
| 8   | Get someone killed.                          |
| 9   | Get someone promoted.                        |
| 10  | Grant someone their illegal but dear desire. |
| 11  | Kidnap or imprison someone.                  |
| 12  | Make someone famous or respected.            |
| 13  | Persuade someone to be an inside mole.       |
| 14  | Replace someone in their job.                |
| 15  | Rescue someone from a bad situation.         |
| 16  | Ruin someone's business.                     |
| 17  | Ruin someone's reputation.                   |
| 18  | Steal someone from an existing employer.     |
| 19  | Trick someone into a treacherous alliance.   |
| 20  | Worm a person into someone's confidence.     |

| d20 | Resource-Related Milestones                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Redirect funds from a rival's business.         |
| 2   | Obtain a vital or valuable component.           |
| 3   | Seize a cache of materials needed for the plot. |
| 4   | Destroy someone else's important resource.      |
| 5   | Take over a valuable income stream.             |
| 6   | Do a favor to erase some burdensome debt.       |
| 7   | Acquire a supply of something very illegal.     |
| 8   | Erase incriminating data on some server.        |
| 9   | Sabotage a rival's gear or critical machinery.  |
| 10  | Persuade a genius to fix a broken resource.     |
| 11  | Find a critical replacement part for a device.  |
| 12  | Recover a hidden stockpile of valuables.        |
| 13  | Destroy a rival's vital supply cache.           |
| 14  | Ruin a rival's profitable income stream.        |
| 15  | Neutralize a creditor and the debt they hold.   |
| 16  | Convince someone to back the plot with cash.    |
| 17  | Acquire a lost prototype or beta device.        |
| 18  | Reclaim stolen resources or project plans.      |
| 19  | Market manipulation by violence and crime.      |
| 20  | Retrieve lost goods before the owners can.      |

| d20 | Business-Related Milestones                       |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Work out the technical bugs in a product.         |
| 2   | Get a specific genius to solve a product issue.   |
| 3   | Destroy a rival's competing product research.     |
| 4   | Forcibly seize an innovative new business.        |
| 5   | Steal a corporate secret helpful to the product.  |
| 6   | Force the government to back off from the plot.   |
| 7   | Take over a gang that acts as a street retailer.  |
| 8   | Acquire critical hidden data for the product.     |
| 9   | Eliminate or subvert an internal critic.          |
| 10  | Sabotage a rival internal product program.        |
| 11  | Execute a test run of the beta product.           |
| 12  | Create a problem the product can then solve.      |
| 13  | Win a government contract for the product.        |
| 14  | Destroy evidence of flaws or product failure.     |
| 15  | Compel an exec to increase product funding.       |
| 16  | Accomplish a great feat with the product beta.    |
| 17  | Coerce or buy positive reporting on the product.  |
| 18  | Sabotage a rival corp's competing product.        |
| 19  | Stop a team of rival saboteurs before they act.   |
| 20  | Frame a rival for a product accident or disaster. |



## NPC OPERATOR TEAMS

In many cases, it's not necessary to develop the specifics of the other operator teams in your game. They're the ones who scoop up the jobs that the PCs leave on the table, but their success or failure can be left as a minor rumor on the street or something seen in the progress or failure of their patron's Scheme.

At other times, however, the GM will want to flesh out a rival team. The tables on this and the following page can help in that process.

- **Roll or pick a team's favorite methodology.** This will influence the kind of jobs they're likely to take, or at least the jobs they're good at.
- **Decide on the team composition,** choosing how many combatants, hackers, tech specialists, and social experts are on the team. Tech specialists can include medics, infiltrators, riggers, and technicians, while social experts might be faces, fixers, or similar people-focused operators. Most teams have at least three and no more than five consistent members.
- **Roll or pick a trait suitable to their role, a character quality, and a current activity.** These results will shape their capabilities and motivations.
- **Choose stat blocks for each member** from the example stat blocks starting on page 185, factoring in any special talents indicated by the earlier rolls.
- **Give each operator a name,** a sentence or two of physical description, and three words describing their personality.

Keep these details on file. It may be that the PCs could run into these operators on one of their own missions, or need to hire them as backup or additional muscle for a particularly delicate job.

### d12 The team prefers to employ...

- |    |                                                                                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Targeted assassinations and carefully set-up hits on an unwitting victim                                                |
| 2  | Noxious gases, poisons, and pharmaceuticals, perhaps including illicit combat drugs                                     |
| 3  | Brute physical violence administered at very close range                                                                |
| 4  | Blackmail and local connections to bring recalcitrant targets to heel                                                   |
| 5  | Clockwork infiltrations with as little a chance of discovery as possible, and preferably no hint they'd ever been there |
| 6  | Silver-tongued diplomacy to bring a peaceful resolution to matters                                                      |
| 7  | Heavy drone and vehicle support for hard hits and fast retreats                                                         |
| 8  | Deep hacking efforts to subvert the target site or plague targeted people                                               |
| 9  | Popular support from enthusiastic local fans willing to go to great risks for them                                      |
| 10 | Disposable bodies from temp hires, candidates for membership, or mercs                                                  |
| 11 | Muscle and support from connections with a past corp, government, or gang they used to belong to                        |
| 12 | Ambushes, traps, and surprise attacks meant to seize the desired target and get away quickly                            |



| d20 | A combatant with...    | A hacker with...          | A tech with...           | A face with...           |
|-----|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1   | Elite combat cyberware | Contacts in every corp    | A private medical clinic | Inhuman beauty           |
| 2   | An array of poisons    | Surprising combat skill   | Jury-rigged cyberware    | Smuggler connections     |
| 3   | Incredible durability  | Incredible intuition      | A serious drug problem   | Favors owed by many      |
| 4   | Unnatural luck         | A superb cyberdeck        | A dearly-loved vehicle   | Blackmail on corpses     |
| 5   | Deadly marksmanship    | Social engineering skills | An army of pet drones    | Black market ties        |
| 6   | Superb weaponry        | A lust for danger         | Tools-turned-weapons     | Irrational confidence    |
| 7   | A license to kill      | A specialized focus       | A love for explosives    | Numerous enemies         |
| 8   | Lethal fists           | A large set of programs   | Amazing first aid skills | Assassination talents    |
| 9   | A sniper's eye         | A jury-rigged deck        | Incredibly illegal tech  | A debt to pay            |
| 10  | A craving for murder   | Extreme athleticism       | Organlegger ties         | Long-standing alliances  |
| 11  | Terrible scars         | City gov connections      | A secret workshop        | Inside information       |
| 12  | A secret death wish    | A pet drone               | A collection of vehicles | City government ties     |
| 13  | A fearsome reputation  | A talent for subterfuge   | A vehicle-mounted gun    | No trace of loyalty      |
| 14  | Blinding speed         | A shut-in personality     | Heavily modded gear      | Vast amounts of money    |
| 15  | A surprise weapon      | Unstable cyberware        | A stolen prototype       | A sterling reputation    |
| 16  | A reluctance to kill   | Prodigious hacking skill  | A drug cooking lab       | Justified paranoia       |
| 17  | An oversized weapon    | No social skills          | Malfunctioning cyber     | Surprising combat skills |
| 18  | A contempt for danger  | Legacy brain damage       | Black market ties        | An influential family    |
| 19  | Uncanny martial skill  | A cult following          | Many grateful patients   | Old corp ties            |
| 20  | An exotic weapon       | Prototype cyberware       | Several useful prentices | Poor taste in patrons    |

| d20 | ...who...                                           | ...and is currently...                               |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | hates their teammates but can't quit the team       | trying to shake off a drug addiction                 |
| 2   | feels certain they're going to die soon             | scraping up money to pay off a dangerous creditor    |
| 3   | is in a romantic relationship with a teammate       | in arrears for cyber maintenance                     |
| 4   | feels indebted to a patron                          | being threatened by a government official or cop     |
| 5   | is intensely avaricious in matters of money         | trying to acquire a fine new piece of gear           |
| 6   | wants to quit this life but has no idea how         | seeking expensive distraction via debauchery         |
| 7   | is running from a very bad choice they made         | paying off a cyberdoc for work they had done         |
| 8   | is a secret corporate mole                          | wooing a very unsuitable romantic partner            |
| 9   | dreams of a life of fame and luxury                 | hiding from an insistent creditor's muscle           |
| 10  | feels overwhelmed by the demands of their life      | looking to take out someone who wronged them         |
| 11  | craves the excitement of a true challenge           | spending time with their family                      |
| 12  | has lost the original reason they took up this life | drinking or drugging themselves into a stupor        |
| 13  | is so indebted they have no choice but to do this   | polishing their skills with minor jobs and training  |
| 14  | is being blackmailed or coerced by a teammate       | doing a job as a favor to an old friend or kindred   |
| 15  | feels like their team is the only family they have  | serving a short sentence in jail                     |
| 16  | is absorbed in drugs, sex, or other distractions    | investigating the likely subject of a future mission |
| 17  | is motivated by a burning need for revenge          | planning a job with the other team members           |
| 18  | feels gnawing guilt over what they've done          | quarreling with a local gang                         |
| 19  | is using the team to obtain their secret goal       | trying to hide from city law enforcement             |
| 20  | is utterly indifferent to human life                | fighting a serious disease or health complication    |





## NPC Scheme Results

When an NPC operator team gets sent into a mission, the GM should check the situation table below and add up the relevant modifiers. A 2d6 is then rolled and compared to the mission result table.

Successes will tend to look similar, while every failed mission is unique in its own way. The other tables on this page provide some suggestions as to how a

mission may have been botched, or what unfortunate consequences came of a partially-successful effort or resulted from a complete failure.

Once you have the basic outline of events, you can make up a short rumor or public news bit reflecting the result of the team's efforts. Such glimpses of activity do much towards making your world a live one.

| Situation                                       | Mod      |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The team is full of novice operators            | -2       |
| The team is still a little green                | -1       |
| The team has a reputation and a history         | +0       |
| The team is made up of reliable veterans        | +1       |
| The team is made up of the current elite        | +2       |
| The team is composed of living legends          | +3       |
| The milestone is a fairly easy job              | +1 to +2 |
| The milestone is an unusually difficult job     | -1 to -2 |
| The patron is poor or ill-suited to handle this | -1 to -2 |
| The patron offers excellent support             | +1 to +2 |
| The team is particularly ill- or well-suited    | -2 to +2 |

| d20 | Unfortunate Consequences                         |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | A team member suffered a Major Injury            |
| 2   | The target knows exactly who hired them          |
| 3   | An ally of the team was killed by the target     |
| 4   | Expenses ate the entire team payoff plus some    |
| 5   | A team member was induced to turn traitor        |
| 6   | The target hardened their security greatly after |
| 7   | A critical piece of team gear was destroyed      |
| 8   | The team drew a dangerous amount of heat         |
| 9   | The team feels double-crossed by the patron      |
| 10  | A substantial number of civilians were killed    |
| 11  | A team member was killed                         |
| 12  | Substantial property damage was produced         |
| 13  | A local celebrity was killed in the operation    |
| 14  | The team somehow crossed a major official        |
| 15  | A team member was traumatized into retiring      |
| 16  | Some target died who wasn't supposed to          |
| 17  | The team double-crossed the patron somehow       |
| 18  | The team burned an important relationship        |
| 19  | Somebody got blackmail on the team or patron     |
| 20  | The team got a contract put out on them          |

| 2d6  | The Mission Result                                                                                                                                                              |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2-   | Not only did they fail, but they somehow managed to make the situation much worse for their patron with two unfortunate consequences for the team and one for the actual patron |
| 3-5  | The mission was a failure, and two unfortunate consequences were suffered as collateral damage                                                                                  |
| 6-8  | The mission was a success, but one unfortunate consequence resulted                                                                                                             |
| 9-11 | A solid success with no real missteps                                                                                                                                           |
| 12+  | Perfectly smooth job that accomplished everything desired without the slightest collateral damage                                                                               |

| d12 | They failed because...                                                            |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | There was a traitor within the team or someone they relied upon for the mission   |
| 2   | A corp or gang had unsuspected involvement and rolled right over them             |
| 3   | They got cocky, and went into the situation with less force or care than was wise |
| 4   | They got stomped by another operator team that the target hired to deal with them |
| 5   | They fundamentally misunderstood the client's wishes and did the wrong thing      |
| 6   | They were woefully undersupported by their client or fed bad information          |
| 7   | They got intimidated or bribed into backing off by the target                     |
| 8   | They made their play, but it just wasn't good enough, and the target beat them    |
| 9   | Somebody they relied on for the mission wasn't as good as they should have been   |
| 10  | They "succeeded" at a cost or with consequences that are worse than failure       |
| 11  | The patron did not correctly understand the situation they sent them into         |
| 12  | Sheer bad luck made everything go wrong                                           |

## AN EXAMPLE OF BUILDING A SCHEME AND A HOOK

The GM is using the default setting of the City provided in this book and has decided to start the PCs in the miserable slum district of Gannett. He hasn't done any other prep for the district, so he'll need to come up with a few clients first.

To begin, he rolls up a gang with the tables starting on page 128, coming up with the Wausau Brotherhood, a zealous local outfit determined to free Wisconsin from the grip of the corporations one district at a time. They're guns for hire, selling protection and muscle to the highest bidder, but they're facing a crackdown from the city cops due to their unpalatable ideology.

The GM decides that their main goal is going to be easing the heat from the city government, and that it's big enough to justify being a district-scale scheme. According to the template, it'll take 20 progress points to complete it and three successful milestones before the final mission.

The GM begins at the end, deciding to randomly roll the ultimate goal of the mission. The result is a 7, "build physical force". Evidently, the Brotherhood wants to build up their military muscle until the city decides it's not worth the cost of suppressing them.

Working backwards along the milestones, the GM decides to roll on the NPC-related milestone table, getting an 18, "steal someone from an existing employer". Marianna Soledad is an account executive with Acheron who has access to a large amount of surplus military gear and past ties with the Brotherhood's leader. If the gang can bring her over to their side, she can give them the keys to military-grade hardware.

The gang needs to somehow get leverage on her, however, and that means the second milestone is probably a business-related one. The GM rolls a 9, for "eliminate or subvert an internal critic". Clearly, the gang needs to take out Marianna's supervisor, Willis Glendale, so she has room to climb... and so she is fully aware of the consequences of uncooperativeness.

Making a hit like that is going to take resources, so the GM makes the first milestone a resource-related one. The die comes up 11, "find a critical replacement part for a device". The GM thinks about that for a bit, since it doesn't seem to fit smoothly. He considers rerolling, but then realizes that maybe the job isn't to *find* a part, but to *sabotage* one. An Acheron account exec is going to be extremely hard to hit directly, but if his limo happens to suffer a tragic and deniable accident, who could blame his subordinates? Thus, the GM makes the first milestone "sabotage the fuel cell of Glendale's limo".

The GM then writes the scheme down in a simple fashion: "The Wausau Brotherhood need somebody to

sabotage the fuel cell of the Acheron account supervisor Willis Glendale. This will make room to advance for his subordinate, Marianna Soledad. The gang will then try to lean on Marianna to get her to release large amounts of surplus miltech to them so they have the muscle to stand off city law enforcement."

The final step in the process is turning this scheme into an actual mission hook, because the purpose of the whole process is to give the GM an easy way to build missions.

With the district scheme template in hand, the GM sees that the Brotherhood will need 5 progress points to get at the fuel cell of Glendale's limo. He breaks it into two general missions; first, to identify and locate the limo, and second, to damage it enough that it has to go into an Acheron shop for repairs. The first task is worth 2 progress points, the GM decides, and the second is worth 3.

As the first has priority, the GM turns it into a mission. The patron will be Captain Curtis Szemanski, the right hand of the Brotherhood's leader. He'll put the word out with the local fixers that he needs a team to hit an Acheron vehicle maintenance shop and download some vehicle records for him. The GM consults the mission rewards guidelines on page 176, and sees that as a job for newbie operators the gang will offer \$10,000 for its successful completion.

The GM then uses the guidelines on the following page to flesh out the mission hook, building just enough of it to make a plausible pitch from a local fixer. Any more work than this is to be avoided, since a GM should only be doing as much prep as they strictly need for the next session.

If they turn the job down, it will stay available on the board for a while until the GM decides the Brotherhood has found someone else to do it. At that point, the GM might simply decide what the outcome was, or they could leave it more in the hands of random chance by generating an NPC operator team and using the scheme results table on the opposite page to get a random outcome.

In either case, the PCs should hear about it if it's something that would be spoken of on the street. A silent success might leave nothing in its wake, but if the NPC team got mauled or the mission went sideways, a few comments from a local NPC or an overheard conversation at a bar can help give the players a sense that the world is moving on around them. A desperate Brotherhood might come back to them with a better paycheck if the first team botched it, or Acheron might notice the gang's involvement and start paying the PCs to do something about it in turn.



# How To Create A Mission

Many RPG sourcebooks go to great lengths to present a GM with countless NPCs, organizations, background conflicts, macguffins, and other grist for their creative mill. What they often neglect to provide, however, is a step-by-step procedure by which a GM can actually turn that material into a playable night's gaming. This section will give you the necessary tools with which you can hammer your raw inspiration into something you and your friends can enjoy at the table.

## THREE STAGES OF PREP

Building a mission for your campaign is done in several stages. This segmented construction isn't just decorative complexity, but a means by which you can save your creative energy and ensure that anything you build has a practical return in table time.

**For the first stage,** you create the mission outline and establish the basic facts of the job and situation. You create exactly as much as is necessary for a fixer to pitch the job to the PCs and no more. If you exert yourself in building extra NPCs, fleshing out locations, and elaborating conflicts, you run the risk of wasted effort when the players turn up their nose at the job.

These job hooks are presented to the players at the end of an evening's gaming, whereupon they need to either pick one or give you a clear indication of what they *do* want to do next time you play. Nobody gets to leave the table until you know what you need to prep for next time.

**For the second stage,** you create the actual meat of the adventure, detailing all the information you need about the situation to handle a typically reckless team of PC operators. You do this after the PCs have either picked one of your first-stage job hooks or told you their independent plans for the next session's gaming. You can afford to put extra effort into this creation because you know the players are going to be making use of it during the next gaming night.

**The third stage** happens after the mission has been run, during the downtime between sessions. Here, you do the after-action cleanup in assigning Heat to overly-loud operative teams, advancing Schemes that the job helped, and making notes on NPCs who were affected by the job and local events that might reflect it. Some jobs might vanish soundlessly into the murk of the city, being too minor or too isolated to affect much else, but other work is going to have consequences that you need to portray to the players.

## PREPARING THE HOOK

To generate the hook that their fixer or patron is going to offer to the PCs, follow the steps below.

1. **Roll two mission tags from the table on page 144.** These mission tags will provide you with basic clues as to antagonists, patrons, complications, and general flavor for the mission. You can blend them together to create a synthesis of the two, play them as two different elements in conflict in the situation, or otherwise use them as touchstones for your creativity.
2. **Roll a mission type from the tables starting on page 158.** Here, you identify just what it is the patron needs done. You can fill in the blanks of antagonists, objectives, payoffs, and other details with the Antagonists, Friends, Things, Places, and Complications you got from your mission tags. Don't write more than four or five sentences describing the mission outline and don't worry about giving NPCs stats, or mapping locations, or doing anything more elaborate than a basic description of the mission.
3. **Pick a mission payoff from the guidelines on page 176.** Use the tools there to figure out how much the patron is willing to pay to get the job done.
4. **Lastly, wrap up the info you've established into a brief mission hook.** You don't need to tell the PCs all the details of the mission, because a fixer isn't going to be laying every particular out for a team that isn't ready to commit to the job. The fixer may or may not reveal the patron to the PCs; sometimes it can't be helped or is obvious, but usually such information is kept close. For this step, just come up with a job offer that includes the pay rate and the objective and have some idea of how the fixer will present it.

Once you've generated this hook, *stop*. If you over-commit at this stage and start drawing up floor plans or mapping facility networks you're going to be tempted to "encourage" the PCs to pick this job. Some groups will be okay with that and glad to have a GM who provides the next night's play on their own initiative. For a sandbox campaign, however, most players are going to have their own ideas about where to take their operators, and you don't want to incentivize yourself towards blocking that.



## CREATING THE MISSION

At the end of the last session your players picked one of your hooks or came up with their own plan. Now, during the downtime before the next evening's gaming, you take the time to turn that intention into an actual adventure.

1. **Identify the important NPCs.** Give names and any necessary details to the major players in the mission. When possible, use NPCs you've already established in the district. Recurring encounters with the same faces help give a sense of place to your gaming, and can inspire personal animosities or friendlier ties with the PCs.
2. **Give NPCs combat stats.** If you think an NPC is likely to get in a fight, give them combat statistics and appropriate cyber from the stat blocks starting on page 185. Remember to stat out gangers, corp security, or other mooks the PCs are likely to be shooting at.
3. **Inventory the places of importance.** Make a list of the places the PCs are likely to end up in. If the mission's macguffin is located in a corp facility, you're going to need to detail that facility. If the PCs are expected to meet their patron in a shady slum bar, you're going to need to name and describe that bar. At this stage, just make a list of place names, district locations, and a few sentences of description.
4. **Map the tactically important places.** If the PCs are going to be infiltrating a site, use the guide for creating infiltration missions on page 169. If you expect them to get into a firefight in a location, sketch a floor plan or at least have some idea of how the area is laid out. If only social activities are expected in a place, you don't need to worry about drawing out lines of fire or marking security doors; these places can exist as no more than a name and a few lines of description.
5. **Do a mental walkthrough.** You know your players better than the author does, and you likely have a general idea of how they're apt to approach the mission. Starting from the mission hook, walk through the events and challenges of the mission and make sure that they actually make sense. If you're certain that the group is going to take a particular course of action, make sure you have answers to their inevitable questions. The players will doubtless think of angles and tactics you never considered, but at least make sure there's one plausible path through.

Once you've created the mission and gotten the details properly mapped out, you're ready to run it.

## CLEANING UP AFTERWARDS

So now the mission is done, the players have decided on their next course of action, and you're ready to build out the next mission for them. Before you do that, however, you should take a moment to clean up the remnants of the last session's play.

1. **Add Heat to the team.** If they behaved badly according to the guidelines on page 178, add some Heat to the group. If they get hot enough, they might find a city SWAT team bursting in on them in the middle of their next job. Make sure the players know when they're starting to push the limits of acceptability, however; Heat gain should be a choice, not a surprise.
2. **Resolve the unchosen hooks.** You offered them several mission hooks, so some of them didn't get picked. Some of them might stick around for a while and be available after this job, others might time out and disappear, and some might be resolved by other operator teams with the guidelines on page 140.
3. **Generate fresh hooks.** If you don't have three or four job options to offer the PCs at the end of this mission, repeat the first stage of prep to generate them.
4. **Progress the world.** The PCs did something with the last mission, and that something is going to have consequences. Make up a few short news bites or street scenes that show how their latest exploits have affected the world. If some NPC has been particularly pleased or infuriated with them, make a note of it. At least once every session the PCs should see some callback to their prior activities.

Once you've completed this cleanup you're ready to move forward with the next mission's creation.



# MISSION TAGS

Once you've built your mission framework from the tools in this chapter, it's time to fill it out with **mission tags**. These tropes and cues are meant to provide you with grist for fleshing out your basic mission outline and simplify your work in making interesting jobs for your PCs.

A mission tag begins with a basic trope or concept for you to riff on. After that, three examples are given for five different elements.

**Enemies** are antagonists and foes that fit the tag. If you're dealing with *Organ Leggers*, then one possible enemy is "A cyberclinic exec with a lot of hardware". When you need an antagonist slot filled, you can pull something from this entry.

**Friends** are sympathetic figures you can use to feed mission hooks to the PCs or give them assistance inside the adventure.

**Complications** are twists to the situation that make life harder for the team or add nuance.

| d00   | Mission Tag            | d00   | Mission Tag           |
|-------|------------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1-2   | Abandoned Town         | 51-52 | Hideous Hunger        |
| 3-4   | Accidental Knowledge   | 53-54 | Hot Blackmail         |
| 5-6   | Angry Demagogue        | 55-56 | Human Property        |
| 7-8   | Armed Revolutionaries  | 57-58 | Inside Screwjob       |
| 9-10  | Bad Cyber              | 59-60 | Kidnapped Prince      |
| 11-12 | Beleaguered Locals     | 61-62 | Lost Treasure         |
| 13-14 | Big Hitter             | 63-64 | Mad Artist            |
| 15-16 | Biological Weapon      | 65-66 | Malevolent Politician |
| 17-18 | Breakthrough Tech      | 67-68 | Market Share          |
| 19-20 | Bureaucratic Error     | 69-70 | Organ Leggers         |
| 21-22 | Celebrity Face         | 71-72 | Reckless Gang         |
| 23-24 | City Beneath           | 73-74 | Religious Zealot      |
| 25-26 | Controlled Opposition  | 75-76 | Roaming Raiders       |
| 27-28 | Corporate Defector     | 77-78 | Secret Base           |
| 29-30 | Corrupt Corper         | 79-80 | Smuggled Goods        |
| 31-32 | Crazed Ideology        | 81-82 | Top Secret            |
| 33-34 | Criminal Cop           | 83-84 | Turf War              |
| 35-36 | Crooked Fixer          | 85-86 | Unexpected Heat       |
| 37-38 | Drug Dealer            | 87-88 | Unleashed Beast       |
| 39-40 | Feckless Idealist      | 89-90 | Unlikely Ties         |
| 41-42 | Forbidden Tech         | 91-92 | Unrefusable Offer     |
| 43-44 | Gang Renunciate        | 93-94 | Unwelcome Refugee     |
| 45-46 | Genius Hacker          | 95-96 | Upstart Gang          |
| 47-48 | Government Involvement | 97-98 | White Knight          |
| 49-50 | Hidden Databank        | 99-00 | Wrathful Avenger      |

**Things** are macguffins, treasures, objectives, or other objects that fit the trope and would be of interest to the players.

**Places** are those places that particularly fit the tag's trope or have to do with the kind of activities the tag involves.

To save space, these five heading types are abbreviated as "E", "F", "C", "T", and "P" in each tag entry.

## CUSTOMIZING TAGS FOR MISSIONS

While it's possible to use a tag straight for a mission framework, it's generally better to roll or pick twice from the adjacent table and then mix the tags together to create your own enemies, friends, and so forth.

For example, suppose that you rolled *Angry Demagogue* and *Biological Weapon* as your two mission tags. Your mission framework needs an Enemy, so you look at the three examples of Enemies for each tag, pick one from each, and blend them.

In this case, you could pull "Ethnic or religious supremacist" from the former and "Suicidal bioscientist who wants revenge at all costs" from the latter. A pulse of the blender later, and you've got Dr. Vincenzo Lao, a major figure in the Coastal Rights Front quasi-terrorist group dedicated to expelling the New Utahn conquerors from the Vancport megaplex. After his family's murder in a Utahn military action, the doctor craves only death for himself and all the hated invaders.

As the mission framework you built says that you need a patron to feed the job to the party's fixer, you then mix "Peace-minded rival within the group" and "Sympathetic victim dying of the disease" to make Lucille Vaughn, Lao's former rival in the group's upper echelons who wanted a slow burn against the Utahns instead of a bloody uprising. He infected her with a prototype of the disease, but not without drawing her suspicions. Vaughn needs outsiders to investigate, and she wants it to happen while she's alive to see it.

To mix it up, you then add a twist of blended Complications: "The demagogue is working for a corp or gang" and "Anyone having anything to do with the weapon is going to get wiped out by the corps or city". Bioweapon research is so incredibly dangerous that any corp who conducted it would be purged by their peers... so Sierra-Quang Enterprises is deniably arranging for Lao to acquire what he needs in expectation of looting his research after he's dead. They've got a cut-out security team in place to make sure the doctor can do his research in peace and never actually releases it on the public. Surely nothing will go wrong.

In similar fashion you can blend and mix the other categories to fill out your framework. Don't hesitate to edit and tweak things as you need; these tags are just tools for you and not rigid forms to obey.

### Abandoned Town

The mission involves an abandoned section of the city, one where only the most desperate would consider going. An industrial accident or natural disaster may have rendered the place uninhabitable, or it might be a no-man's land between two warring powers that will kill anyone they find in it. Corporate disputes may have cordoned it off, or a corp may have purchased it and left it to rot, or it may even be a literal abandoned town left to decay in the outland beyond the city.

- E** Crazy gang boss in the ruins, Brutal scavenger chief, Monstrous spawn of the wreckage
- F** Desperate local who refuses to leave, Investigator seeking the truth of the downfall, Pioneer trying to revive the place
- C** The place is still in the process of abandonment, Scavengers are pillaging it actively, The cause of abandonment is still an active hazard
- T** Precious things lost in the downfall, Actionable proof of a corp's culpability, Tech or resource that could revive the town
- P** Desolate public gathering place, Crumbled residence tower, Building smashed by the cause of the ruin

### Angry Demagogue

A leader has drawn together a number of people with their fiery words and wrathful vision, promising justice and vengeance against their real or perceived enemies. They've played on old injuries and present troubles to stir up their followers, many of whom are convinced that only by violent action can justice be had and their tormentors punished.

- E** Ethnic or religious supremacist, Violent factional leader of an otherwise sympathetic cause, Returned hero thought killed by the group's enemies
- F** Hapless local grugged by the group, Peace-minded rival within the group, Disenchanted former group member
- C** The demagogue is working for a corp or gang, The demagogue needs to keep upping the stakes or they'll be replaced, The demagogue is about to badly overstep
- T** Object symbolic of the group's grievances, Proof of the justification or lack thereof of their cause, Payment made to buy them off or redirect them
- P** Known group hangout, Neighborhood dominated by the group, Place the group was driven out of or where they suffered wrongs

### Accidental Knowledge

Somebody has learned something they absolutely should not know. It may be incriminating evidence, insider trading knowledge, data passcodes that can't be conveniently changed, secret corporate product plans, proof of a gang alliance with a corp, or some other problematic knowledge. They probably want to do something with this knowledge, and the affected party might suspect that the information has leaked.

- E** Suspicious corporate investigator, Leaker desperate to plug their leak before it's discovered, Treacherous "partner" to the one with the information
- F** Recklessly ambitious underling who got the data, Innocent bystander threatened with ruin by the data, Clueless "lucky" data thief
- C** The data holder vastly underestimates their peril, The data's actually going to make an enemy of an unexpected entity, The data's value is extremely time-sensitive
- T** The key that unlocks the data's full value, The treasure that the knowledge can claim, The pay that was meant to pay for the data
- P** Grimy underworld meeting place, Secret facility the data revealed, Hidden cache marked by the data

### Armed Revolutionaries

A group of armed insurgents or terrorists have somehow gotten mixed up in the situation, either because they're targeting someone involved in the mission, they want something the mission offers, or they've been paid by someone involved in the situation. The group probably has a corporate patron if it hasn't been stamped out yet, and most members are either hard-core zealots for the Cause or thugs in search of an outlet for their urges.

- E** Cynical group boss going through the motions, Figurehead leader who's a corp catspaw, Charismatic but insane zealot leader
- F** Misguided but sympathetic group member, Victim of the group's last action, Hard-bitten hunter of the group
- C** The group's fighting a splittist sub-group, A corp is egging them on for their own benefit, The group has a sympathetic greater goal
- T** Cache of weapons or drugs to fund the fight, Proof of corporate backing, A ticking bomb that the group set
- P** Hidden slum training site, Neighborhood full of civilian sympathizers, Site of a bloody or destructive action





### Bad Cyber

Malfunctioning cyberware somehow plays a role in the situation. It may be causing a dire illness, provoking irrational behavior, or have caused some critical background event. It may also be that the cyber is working properly, but it's attached to someone who taking advantage of their newfound abilities in highly troublesome ways.

- E** "Used" cyberware vendor, Crazy street doc, Metalhead who pushed his ware too far
- F** Worried spouse or family, Fellow victim of a bad batch of hardware, Victim of the cyber's misuse
- C** It's better than usual but with dire drawbacks, They need to keep the cyber on for their job or survival, An enemy set them up with bad gear
- T** Critical component for repairing it, Dangerous batch of bad ware, Legally-admissible evidence of corporate fault
- P** Site of a cybernetic rampage, Hideout where the victim lairs, Trashed street doc clinic

### Big Hitter

The mission has somehow entangled a big name in the district, some figure of major importance and substantial power. They may be the target of the mission, the patron, or simply affected by the outcome of the job in a way that isn't obvious. If they're exceptionally physically capable, they might be personally present at the mission site as a hazard the PCs have to avoid.

- E** A scheming rival of the big hitter, A troublesome client or henchman of the major figure, The actual figure himself or herself
- F** A sympathetic soul out of revenge on the hitter, A desperate minion of the hitter trying to hide a mistake, A helpful rival of the hitter
- C** The big hitter doesn't want to be involved but is getting dragged in by the situation, The big hitter fundamentally misunderstands the situation, The hitter is actually competing for the same goal
- T** A dangerous piece of blackmail about the hitter, Special gear they commissioned, Tribute intended for them
- P** Luxurious hangout of the elite, Devastated site that suffered the big hitter's wrath, Business or location closely linked to the hitter

### Beleaguered Locals

The local neighborhood's natives are in a terrible situation that may or may not be related to the mission. Their leadership is struggling to cope with the consequences of their troubles, and some of the natives might have very different ideas about how to deal with the situation. Under such circumstances, it's likely that greedy outsiders are moving in to take advantage of their troubles.

- E** Predatory gang boss moving in, Corp manager profiting from the situation, Ambitious native looking to push out "ineffective" local leaders
- F** Sympathetic stall owner, Crusading street journalist, Worried gang boss
- C** Some of the locals are richly profiting from the situation, The party's employers are indirectly causing the issue, The local solution may be worse than the problem
- T** Collected money for dealing with the issue, Proof of the real culprit, Valuables left behind by dead or fled natives
- P** Now-abandoned civic meeting place, Building destroyed by the problems, Stronghold of the intruding or profiteering outsiders

### Biological Weapon

Some sort of biological weapon is involved in the mission. It may have been developed by the target, stolen by them, accidentally discovered by them in a lost cache, or used against them by an enemy. It's probably not drastically contagious, and its effects might be keyed to particular cyber or types of victims. Other powers might be inclined to take drastic action to ensure the afflicted are "contained".

- E** Suicidal bioscientist craving revenge at all costs, Reckless gang boss using dangerous tools, Corporate scientist who doesn't understand the dangers involved
- F** Worried local street doc, Sympathetic victim dying of the weapon, Insider whistleblower trying to get the truth out
- C** The disease's harmful effects are triggered by a catalyst, It was a beneficial treatment gone bad, Anyone having anything to do with it is likely to be exterminated by the corps and city on principle
- T** Cure for the weapon, The secret data on reproducing the bioweapon, The details on how it's going to be spread
- P** Nightmare laboratory full of victims, Wretched plague ward, Building full of diseased corpses

### Breakthrough Tech

The mission involves a significant technical advance, though this innovation may be in some esoteric industrial process or chemical synthesis valuable only to a few producers. Everyone around it knows it's important, however, and the first corporation to get its details can expect to profit richly from it.

- E** Ruthlessly amoral researcher, Cruel scientific headhunter, Traitor inside the research team
- F** Well-meaning research tech, Justly-deserving inventor, Sympathetic entrepreneur
- C** The tech is very dangerous to manufacture, The tech has a serious downside to it, The tech is fake bait to lure out traitors and spies
- T** Useful prototype gear involving the tech, Secret formula vital to the tech, Lost data files needed to implement the tech
- P** Hidden corporate laboratory, Restricted testing grounds, Ransacked remnants of the real inventor's lab

### Celebrity Face

A significant celebrity is involved in the mission, perhaps as a target, a client, or an innocent bystander in the wrong place at the wrong time. The celebrity likely has a crew of handlers and security, along with a mob of zealous fans close by. A rival in the industry may also be involved in activities likely to bring harm to the celeb's reputation or endorsement deals.

- E** Viciously self-centered celebrity, Psychotic cybered fan stalker, Scheming rival celebrity
- F** Harried celeb handler, Sympathetic celeb, Industrious reporter
- C** The celeb is actually a dangerous operative, The celeb is accidentally in the most troublesome possible position, The celeb is actually competing with the PCs over the mission objective
- T** Blackmail on the celeb, Priceless gear or objects from their endorsement partners, Object of enormous sentimental value to the celeb
- P** Thunderously loud public appearance, Heavily-guarded hotel, Dive bar or nightclub targeted for a surprise appearance

### Bureaucratic Error

A city or corporate bureaucrat has made a serious error related to this mission. The wrong resources may have been shipped, the wrong people assigned, or the wrong task given to the workers involved. The bureaucrat is likely eager to cover up their error, a process which may involve eliminating troublesome witnesses to it.

- E** Assassin who was hired to clean up the situation, Corporate rival taking advantage of the mistake, Outside hacker who caused the mistake in order to profit by it
- F** Sympathetic victim of the error, Local trying to take advantage of it, Deserving correct target of the resources or services
- C** The culprit is doubling down on the mistake, The "error" was intentional malfeasance, The blame is being foisted on someone else
- T** Proof that it was a mistake, Resources lost in transit, License or pass granting carte blanche to fix the problem
- P** Remote and completely wrong delivery site, The correct operations site, Secret drop location

### City Beneath

The mission involves the mazelike underways of the city, the sewers, utility passages, demolished megastructures, and other passages that lie beneath the streets. The desperate locals who inhabit them may not be friendly to strangers, while the black sites and secret gang lairs can prove more hazardous still to the uninvited.

- E** Savage cybered sewer-dweller, Gang boss extortionist of the desperate, Cult leader below the city
- F** Plucky subterranean survivor, Broker of below-street information, Local elder trying to protect their people
- C** The underways are nicer than the surface and the locals want to keep out trouble, There's a gang war going on below the streets, There's a recurring environmental hazard that sweeps through
- T** Map to a secret cache or facility, Plunder left here by a now-dead thief, Abandoned extremely illegal tech or forbidden science
- P** Lightless maze of tunnels, Hardscrabble settlement, Sinister portal to the ways below



### Controlled Opposition

The mission involves a group that appears to be antagonistic to another involved party, but is actually being controlled by that group. The rank and file members may not realize it, but the leadership is entirely in the pocket of their supposed enemies, and the plans they undertake will all end up serving their paymaster's purposes.

- E** Traitorous group leader, Secret kingmaker handling the contacts, Senior turncoat unsuspected by the other leaders
- F** Suspicious group member, Victim of a recent treachery, Somebody who knows too much but can't yet prove it
- C** It's actually controlled by a secret faction as a weapon against their rivals in the organization, The control is a recent turn of events, Only part of the org is controlled by its enemies
- T** List of compromised group members, Documents of a secret plot the group is meant to aid in, Payroll meant for the turncoats
- P** Secret meeting place in no-man's land, Private base where borrowed resources are kept, Site of a recent action that ended up helping their supposed enemies

### Corrupt Corper

A corper involved in this mission is even more corrupt than normal, cutting deals that would certainly get them snuffed by headquarters if they ever came to light. They have some kind of backing that prevents that from being a real concern for them, and whatever they're doing is profitable enough to keep that support.

- E** Corper with a horrible hunger, Petty king of an isolated corporate domain, Parasite on local city government with inordinate legal pull
- F** Rival corper who wants to clear them out, Innocent victim of their vile bargains, A former rival who was forced out of the corp by them
- C** Their superiors are using them as an eventually-disposable tool to do what they cannot, A third party has a vested interest in protecting the corper, The corp has no intention of stopping them if their vile machinations are revealed
- T** Wealth garnered by their foul plots, Something they stole from one of their victims, Proof of their excessive wickedness
- P** Business dedicated to their awful schemes, Corp facility under their direct control, Hidden den where their dark work is done

### Corporate Defector

Someone involved in the mission wishes to become an ex-employee of their current corp patrons, but they're too important to be allowed retirement. They may be secretly working with enemies of the corp, or their extraction might be a necessary step in the mission or a requisite payoff for their cooperation.

- E** Amoral corporate headhunter, The subject's 'bodyguard'-slash-handler, The corp investigator who suspects the turncoat's intentions
- F** A family member used as a handle on the employee, A recruiter from another corp who wants them, A fixer who has a reason to want them back on the market
- C** The corporation is giving them something they need to live, They were 'recruited' forcibly in the first place, They need to accomplish something before they can flee
- T** The critical data only they can decode, Some priceless object given them as a sweetener, The tech that's keeping them on a leash
- P** Luxuriantly comfortable prison dorm, Isolated area where they can be snatched, Black site lab where they're working

### Crazed Ideology

Some person or group involved in the mission has a lunatic ideology and is determined to make some grand gesture involving it. Their beliefs provide some sort of psychic benefit to them, however ridiculous they may be, but they tend to be extremely unhealthy for non-believers. This group is willing to do irrational things because its motivations are not rational to begin with.

- E** Wild-eyed demagogue dreaming of utopia, Coldly mad leader of a movement, Desperate cult leader driven to take refuge in impossibilities
- F** Would-be escapee from the movement, Victim of their most recent excess, Member of a group targeted by the ideology
- C** The ideology is very sympathetic in its public aspect, They have a major corporate backer, The ideology could be very useful to the PCs somehow
- T** Tribute offered by zealot members, Ridiculously dangerous device built or obtained by them, Security passcodes given by a secret believer
- P** "Re-education" site for any wavering members, Public-face office of the group, Mass meeting of the group



### Criminal Cop

Police corruption is a given in cyberpunk settings, but this mission involves a cop of far greater criminality than the norm. They might be an actual gang boss, an assassin for their corporate or government masters, or a broker for some horrific service or business that operates under their personal protection. Their peers are unlikely to intervene unless their activities prove problematic for the city government.

- E** Criminal kingpin with a badge, City official who's behind the cop's excesses, Useful monster protected by the law
- F** Hapless idealist among the police, Bitter victim of the cop, Rival criminal who wants to take them out
- C** Their criminal plots are protecting a sympathetic group or person, They're preferable to the alternative for a lot of locals, They've arranged for their wickedness to be entirely legal
- T** Restricted tech or weaponry, A massive blackmail file, Payoff they received
- P** Police precinct building, Palatial private home, Grimy crime den where they meet with their underlings

### Drug Dealer

A dealer in illicit pharmaceuticals is somehow entangled in the mission. Given the ubiquity of drugs in most cyberpunk settings, they are likely unusual in some way, either vending massive amounts of street drugs or offering special chems that can't be had elsewhere. A few might deal in the corp-specific cyber anti-rejection drugs that help keep corporate employees locked into their contracts.

- E** Mad genius with a new and attractive drug, Amoral vendor quicker to spend lives than money, Extortionist using drugs as a tool of control
- F** Addict trying to get free, Local leader with a grudge against the dealer, Victim of a bad batch
- C** They also sell vitally important medical pharms, They're a pillar of the local community, The drugs are just a cover for a much worse trade
- T** Large stash of expensive chems, Formula for a popular new drug, Priceless object sold or given by a desperate junkie
- P** Wretched opium den full of torpid clients, High-end club with party favors, Lab with no interest in safety measures

### Crooked Fixer

Fixers who betray their clients or operators tend to die quickly, but this one has somehow evaded that consequence so far. They may be hopelessly venal, compromised by corp ties, or simply incompetent, but blind luck has kept their victims from realizing the situation. Whatever deal they give the PCs will not go as promised.

- E** Fixer with a secret addiction to be fed, Fixer with someone else's fist around their throat, Fixer who's actually working for someone else
- F** Survivor of a past "mission accident", Former client who suspects something dark, Former employee of the fixer who knows too much
- C** The fixer wasn't compromised until quite recently, They've had a lot of successes lately enabled by their real master, The fixer's deals are so tempting that people don't look hard at them
- T** Huge payment from the fixer's owner, Loot that the fixer took off of a conveniently dead operator team, Proof of the fixer's malfeasance
- P** Richly-appointed lair of the fixer, Site of an "unfortunate turn of luck", Secret meeting place where the fixer meets their real boss

### Feckless Idealist

Someone involved in this situation has a noble ideal or a grand purpose that has no appreciable chance of working as intended. They're too insulated from the world or too willfully blind to understand that their ideal is hopeless as constituted, and they've set in motion plans that can only lead to disaster for those dragged into the situation.

- E** Zealot willing to break eggs, Ruthless mercenary being paid well by the idealist, Roused enemy of the idealist who is bringing down disaster
- F** The sympathetic idealist, A fellow traveler who fears disaster, A luckless victim of their ideals
- C** The plans are so unexpected by others that they're actually working for a brief time, The idealist has made a deal with the metaphorical devil, The idealist is impressing their vision on a deeply unenthusiastic group
- T** The secret weapon that will bring them victory, Cache of wealth donated by a supporter, Funding provided by the puppetmaster behind their plans
- P** Secret meeting of zealous believers, Monument to something the idealist wishes to destroy, Business or site dedicated to the ideal that is not working correctly



### Forbidden Tech

Half of what's in an operator's pockets is likely illegal in the city, but this mission involves a piece of tech that is *really* illegal. It involves bioweapons, poison gases, large-scale military explosives, unspeakably vile VR chips, or something else that no cop or corp security can afford to ignore. Someone may want the tech, may have the tech, or may be trying to get rid of the tech without it being traced.

- E** Amoral scientist bent on building it, Deniable corp official on a black mission, Desperate zealot set on using the tech for their cause
- F** Victim of the tech's use, Rival trying to destroy the tech, Associate who needs the tech to discreetly disappear
- C** The tech is disguised as something else, It was stolen from someone else who wasn't supposed to have it, It's seductively easy to sell on the black market
- T** A key needed to unlock the tech, Vital parts needed to enable the tech, A device that can defend against or neutralize the tech
- P** Grim lab where the tech is created, Site of the tech's recent deployment, Heavily-guarded storage site for the tech

### Genius Hacker

There's a true prodigy of hacking involved in the mission, someone with a remarkable talent for code or virtual mayhem. They may be a direct opponent of the PCs in the virtual world, or their code or hacking activities may have played a major role in the current situation. In the former case, the PCs may need to figure out some way to deal with them before the PC hackers have any real chance of success.

- E** Mercenary hacking prodigy, Only coder who can handle a corp project, Ruthless handler of a hopelessly dependent genius
- F** Sympathetic protege of the hacker, Hacker victim of their online prowess, Hunter looking for the hacker in meat space
- C** The hacker is extremely capable in combat, The hacker is exceedingly elusive in reality, The hacker recently brought down more heat than they planned to handle
- T** The hacker's prized custom deck, A backdoor keycode into the hacker's code, Precious paydata the hacker swiped
- P** A dark and grimy NEET lair, Underground code vendor's shop, Entertainment venue favored by the hacker

### Gang Renunciate

Someone in the mission has walked away from a local gang. While such defections aren't unknown, this person is unwise enough to remain within the gang's reach, either because they can't leave the area or their departure was so infuriating that the gang is reaching out after them. They may have left simply for the sake of a better offer, or the gang may have done something to drive them away.

- E** Relentless gang pursuer, Hired assassin or bounty hunter, Former victim of the gang out for revenge
- F** Sympathetic ex-ganger, Family member or lover trying to help them, Person somehow responsible for their change of heart
- C** It's all a set-up and the "ex-ganger" is still working for their former gang, The renunciate has powerful new allies, The renunciate took a number of gangers with them
- T** A vital object they took with them, The payoff they took from their new boss, Blackmail material on their former employer
- P** Shadowy slum where they've gone to ground, Street full of searching gangers, Hidden safe house

### Government Involvement

The city government has their hands in this situation, either causing it, investigating it, or trying to stop it. The other parties involved are too powerful to directly contravene, or else the government hasn't committed enough resources to simply disperse smaller opponents. In some cases, the PCs may have to operate carefully to avoid government agents or investigations that can't simply be gunned down.

- E** Corrupt city agent looking for profit, Schemer who plans to turn the city's attention on the PCs, Bloodless bureaucrat who cares only for his job and nothing for the cost of it to others
- F** Amiable city clerk, Cop with ties to the situation, City investigator into government corruption
- C** Their involvement is related to an otherwise-uninvolved third party, Someone double-crossed a corrupt official, This is all part of city office politics
- T** Large cache of city property, Extremely valuable license or permit, Stash of overlooked city funds
- P** Gray concrete office building, Mazelike city bureau, Grim city law enforcement office



### Hidden Databank

There's a lost or hidden databank in the situation that's priceless to someone, either for its raw paydata value or for a particular secret on it. One or more sides are searching for the databank, either in the online system where it's kept or around the physical site where a hidden chip is located. Even finding its general hiding place may be a challenge.

- E** Powerful local who fears blackmail, The chip's former owner trying to recover it, Hacker who needs that chip to avoid a dire consequence
- F** The luckless soul who lost it, A local who knows too much about it, Curious investigator who's heard rumors of it
- C** The chip's data is very time-sensitive, The chip requires a separate key to decrypt, The chip doesn't exist and is bait for another plot
- T** A related chip with valuable paydata, The map to where it's hidden, The key to unlock the security around it
- P** Ransacked site where it might have been, Hidden data lab meant for cracking it, The high-security site it was stolen from

### Hideous Hunger

A person involved in the situation has an abhorrent craving or habit that they must feed, and their need is coloring their goals. A GM doesn't need to make this appetite explicit; implications and suggestions tend to be most effective in provoking the worst of player imaginations. Whatever it is should be something horrible even by dystopian standards.

- E** The dealer who supplies this craving, An aficionado who spreads it among the decadent, Brutal minion of the vice owner
- F** An escaped almost-victim of the vice, Horrified witness of events, Relative of a vanished participant in the appetite
- C** The hunger isn't physically possible without sinister tech, They have protection from fellow decadents, Their appetite leaves a hole in their defenses
- T** Proof of their sins, The payment they need for their next fix, Precious loot left behind by a dead co-indulger
- P** Transport waystation for the vice, Hidden dump for the remnants, Salon of fellow degenerates



### Hot Blackmail

Someone involved in this situation has a piece of blackmail that can't be safely put away. They may have a limited window of time before events render the material useless, the target is able to destroy it, or the target is no longer useful to them. They need to act quickly on the blackmail if they're to get anything profitable out of it, and their move will somehow be involved in the adventure.

- E** Traitorous secretary, Machiavellian corporate middleman, Former associated turned enemy
- F** Survivor of an event that was supposed to be buried, Faithful minion of the target, Idealist trying to use the blackmail for good
- C** Using the blackmail will have consequences far beyond those expected, The target intentionally put the blackmail out to identify would-be manipulators, A third party wants the blackmail quashed at all costs
- T** Valuable goods involved in the blackmail, Datachip with the encryption key to it, Payoff to the blackmail's supplier
- P** Corner booth in a shady nightclub, Site of the event that needed concealing, Tense meeting place for exchanging the material

### Inside Screwjob

A person involved with the mission is intentionally tanking it. This probably shouldn't be the client, as operators tend to half-expect that. Instead, it's probably some minion of the client or a capable agent of the other side who's learned about the incoming mission. While the resulting job shouldn't necessarily be a death trap, it's liable to go very bad, very quickly.

- E** Traitorous minion of the client, Dangerously capable mission target, Counter-intelligence expert for hire
- F** Survivor of a premature move by the traitor, Agent of the client trying to make things right, Fellow victim of the inside job
- C** The malefactor needs the mission to fail in a very specific way, The client is being set up by their superior, The screwjob happens when a supposedly loyal PC ally turns on them
- T** Proof of the traitor's identity, Precious object the target used as bait, Payment intended for the traitor
- P** Meeting site that turns hot, Target facility with interior that doesn't match the briefing, Hidden location with the real mission target

### Human Property

Commoditized human beings are involved in the mission somehow, whether as sex workers, slave laborers, organ "donors", pit fighters, or some other sort of traffic. In the City, this may include indentured workers, though those people are valuable enough to merit using an actual legal contract to control them rather than the simpler expedients of a drug habit and brute violence.

- E** Savage gang slaver, Bloodless corporate HR manager, Psychotic organlegger boss
- F** Relative of one of the victims, Escaped victim with someone left behind, Competitor taking umbrage at their rival's use of free labor
- C** The victims chose their fate as preferable to their former life, They're treated very well due to their value to someone, The traffic involves extensive false pretenses
- T** Organs salvaged from victims, Precious item a victim hid, The valuable products the victims are working to produce
- P** Grimy human kennel, Immaculate facility with a hidden darkness, Dumping site for used-up labor

### Kidnapped Prince

Corpers love their children too, to a fiscally defensible extent, and so it's not unknown for some slumming scion or careless princess to be collected by a rival or an entrepreneurial gang. If they're lucky, their parents care enough to pay for a peaceful resolution. If they're unlucky, their parents care enough to pay for a team of professional murderers to make a clarifying example.

- E** Corporate rival trying to apply pressure, Gang boss who saw their chance, Psychotic organlegger looking for a "special order"
- F** Faithful family combat butler, Young friend of the victim, Kidnapper who wants to get clear of the situation
- C** The scion actually set the situation up but may not be in control right now, The kidnappers aren't interested in money, Somebody would prefer the scion to be dead
- T** Some vital object the prince was carrying, The ransom payment, The critical data or blackmail material they're trading them for
- P** Dingy hideout in the slums, Loud street club favored by slumming corpors, Elegant corper tower where the parents live

### Lost Treasure

Something precious is involved in this mission, an object once thought lost or some tech that is no longer easily produced in the City. If its presence were made public too many people would try to seize it, so everyone involved is trying to keep it quiet. It may be the mission's target, the mission payoff, or a discovery made by one side's blind luck during the mission's actual execution.

- E** Ruthless salvage gang boss, Remorseless agent of its original owner, The object's crazed guardian
- F** Local who twigged to its presence, Nearby neighbor trying to dodge the crossfire, Treasure hunter who's been searching for it
- C** It's physically dangerous or toxic to possess, Its supposed existence is bait in a trap, It's too bulky to easily move by hand
- T** Priceless artifact of political significance, Prototype tech never duplicated, Rare substance now almost entirely used up or lost
- P** Collapsed facility where it was stored, Dangerous zone of radiation or toxins surrounding its hiding place, Maze of buildings in which it is hidden

### Malevolent Politician

A politician of more than ordinary malice is involved in the situation, either as a target, a client, or an interested third party. They may not be able to admit to public ties with the parties involved, but they're likely to "nudge" the government forces under their control in whatever directions are most profitable for them or their corporate backers. Their intentions are uniformly vile and inclined to make things worse.

- E** Reformer who only ever makes things worse, Benign figurehead with horrible appetites, Faceless bureau chief of a black department
- F** Underling with a grudge, Street reporter with inside information, Rival politician sensing an opening
- C** The politician has party thugs on call, The local government averts its eyes from their doings, Eliminating them would open the way for an even worse politician
- T** Blackmail that would end their career, Funds from a large bribe, Classified government files
- P** Tense political rally, Heavily-fortified party headquarters, Slum area under de facto party control

### Mad Artist

Art still exists in the chromed future, but not always of a kind that is pleasant to experience. Some lunatic artist is pursuing an aesthetic vision that is likely to cause large amounts of death or suffering, a situation that may be the entire point of the piece or is perhaps just an unfortunate necessity. Such large-scale works often involve numerous helpers, though they may not understand the full scope of their actions.

- E** Revolutionary artist seeking the future in rubble, Demented biosculptor with "pets", Fanatical aesthete who will perfect an area regardless of the cost
- F** Hapless victim of a prior artwork, Terrified subject of the artist's latest obsession, Disgusted helper who fled their vision
- C** They're marketable enough for corp backing, Someone's helping them as their vision is useful for their purposes, They are genuinely terrible at art and have profoundly inane ideas
- T** Encryption key for their timed explosives, Formula for the cure for their bioweapon, Exceedingly expensive art piece
- P** Uptown corper gallery, Inexplicable large-scale art installation, Filthy artist's den

### Market Share

This mission is complicated by two or more corps fighting over the market share for their products. The conflict might be drawing heat right on top of the mission zone, the mission may be related to advancing a corp's interests. The client might even be a third corp trying to make sure everyone involved loses via sabotage of production lines and kidnapping or assassination of R&D staff.

- E** Desperate corp manager on his last chance, Gang boss on a corp's payroll, Marketing exec who will let nothing stand in her way
- F** Local shop owner caught in the crossfire, Entrepreneur struggling to hold on, Victim of a corp's popular but unsafe product line
- C** The products are terrible so they're simply executing any competitors, One combatant is actually a third party who's bootlegging another corp's goods, The weaker corp has the better product
- T** Top-secret product formula, Store of precious components, Credchip with a large street marketing budget on it
- P** Smoking crater of a rival store, Violently loud street marketing rally, Rival fan riot scene



### Organ Leggers

The mission involves a group of organleggers bent on kidnapping people and stripping them for used cyber and vital organs. Almost every gang needs a corp backer to clean the goods and get them into the product pipeline, but several layers of cutouts ensure that incriminating evidence is hard to acquire. Victims are often kept "fresh" for some time until the gang's ripper can profitably disassemble them.

- E** Cyberclinic exec with a lot of hardware, Bitter revolutionary looting their class enemies, Psychopath who just enjoys vivisectioning people
- F** Relative of a recent victim, Local who learned too much, Street doc with a grudge
- C** The gang is upscale and does tailored snatches for specific parts, They work the bulk trade with indiscriminate zeal, They have numerous gang allies they supply with cheap cyber
- T** Perfectly-extracted high end cyber, Case of ultra-compatible kidneys, Supply of extremely costly anti-rejection drugs
- P** Hidden cages for fresh stock, Blood-smeared "operating theater", Club where strangers tend to get lost

### Religious Zealot

A fanatic has whipped up the locals here and they're complicating the mission. Whatever the original precepts of the faith, the zealot has turned them into effective tools of local control, and they're goading the natives into acts of wild excess. Whether driven to violence, indulgence, or self-mortification, these enthusiasts are going to be a problem for the PCs.

- E** Populist cult leader preaching apocalypse, Heresiarch with a cadre of skilled fanatics, Corp evangelist with minions desperate to obey the company word and get promoted
- F** Former believer fallen away, Local religious leader, Victim of the zealot's excesses
- C** The zealot is doing useful things as well, The zealot is the only restraint on his frothing minions, The zealot's lieutenants are fighting a multisided factional war over delegated authority
- T** Sacred relic of the faith, Proof of the zealot's very material motivations, Tithes collected from the faithful
- P** Eerie mass rally in the district, Constantly-active temple or church, Burnt-out shell of a rival shrine

### Reckless Gang

A gang is going far beyond the customary subjects of violence in the area, hitting targets that are supposed to stay untouched. City cops, corp security, ruling gang personnel, or other protected figures are taking heat, either because the gang is suicidally overconfident or because they have backers that can plausibly protect them from the consequences. They may or may not be correct in their assumption.

- E** Megalomaniacal gang boss, Corp manager planning to sacrifice the gang, Gang strategist who's actually in the pay of a rival group
- F** Local victim of the new uproar, Gang deserter who dreads the consequences, Local elder trying to calm things down before it's too late
- C** The gang actually does have an effective secret weapon, The gang profoundly misunderstands the political situation, Somebody's been paid off to incite this situation
- T** Contraband the gang stole in a surprise raid, Payoff made for their services, A priceless object they stole from someone very important
- P** Aggressively obvious new gang stronghold, Bombed-out police station, Site of the massacre of a supposedly untouchable group of people

### Roaming Raiders

A nomadic group of raiders is involved in the mission. These might be urban biker gangs that quickly sweep through the territory of rivals to loot and terrorize, or badlander smugglers who do a little land piracy on the side. Such professional plunderers often lay their hands on valuable goods, especially if their advance scouts and agents can give them useful intel.

- E** Raider leader offering freedom to wretched minions, Desperate gang boss driven onto the road by past losses, Ruthless badlander chief
- F** Raider who wants to settle down, Local plundered by the group, Bitter avenger who's been trailing them for some time
- C** The raiders deal in something they bring with them, They're mercenaries as well as thieves, They're fleeing a bigger problem
- T** Priceless loot they're carrying to a better market, Precious object stolen from a powerful target, Prototype vehicle of superior qualities
- P** Makeshift camp or squat where they lair, Smashed-up street market, Pillaged remnants of a convoy



### Secret Base

Someone involved in the mission has a base deep within hostile territory or a lair hidden amid an uninvolved populace. It might be a safehouse, a front company, a secretly-allied gang's headquarters, a paid-off street doc's clinic, or some other location from which they can perform their tasks. The base might be allied with the client, or it could be an outpost of the mission target.

- E** Seeming ally who's actually running a hostile base, Local tyrant growing suspicious of an allied base, Base director who's planning on burning the site for a traitorous payoff
- F** Local suffering because of the base's activities, Urchin who's learned too much, Neighbor being leaned on by the base's operators
- C** The base is somehow mobile, Exposing the base would be disastrous to its neighbors, The base is known but thought to belong to someone else
- T** Keycard to get inside the secret area of the base, Roster listing secret agents of the base, Illicit high-value equipment kept in the base
- P** Aggressively inconspicuous office building, Secret tunnel beneath the streets, Hidden slum courtyard

### Top Secret

There's a secret involved in the mission with potentially explosive consequences. Revealing it would have direly negative results for someone or some organization, though tangible proof would be required for a really effective drop. The PCs may or may not be seeking this secret as part of the mission; if not, they might stumble on it.

- E** Professional silencer hired to keep it quiet, Traitorous ally using the PCs to get at the secret, Important local boss threatened by its revealing
- F** Local suffering from the secret's indirect consequences, Relative of someone who learned too much, Curious local investigator
- C** Revealing the secret could be fatal to the PCs too, The secret is something morally monstrous, Protecting the secret would be profitable to the PCs but not to their client
- T** Physical proof of the secret's truth, Possessions of someone who learned too much, Payoff for a guardian of the secret
- P** Hidden site deep within the slums, Isolated facility in the badlands, Concealed facility inside a front business

### Smuggled Goods

The mission involves contraband in some way, probably goods too dangerous for the corps to want them in ordinary hands. Other goods may be mundane but taxed so heavily that the only way to make a profit on them is to dodge the tariffs. Some might be critical medicines or parts that a particular corp keeps a monopoly on, and only smuggled substitutes are affordable to street denizens.

- E** Amoral smuggler nomad chief, Corrupt city bureaucrat running a ring, Gang boss with an iron grip on a particular trade good
- F** Local desperately in need of the goods, Fixer with a contract they have to get filled, Local cop who makes money off smuggler's bribes
- C** The smugglers don't realize the dire nature of what they're carrying, The goods are bait for a particular targeted buyer, The route's being fought over by multiple smuggling rings
- T** A lost shipment of precious goods, List of bribes paid to particular officials, Ultra-tuned smuggling vehicle
- P** Desolate badlands route, Abandoned suburb meeting place, Discreet street stall selling smuggled goods

### Turf War

Two or more gangs, corps, neighborhood groups, religious sects, or other organizations are fighting over control of a piece of turf involved in the mission. Interlopers will be grilled on their loyalties and the wrong answer could be hazardous. One of the sides might be willing to cooperate with outsiders in exchange for some useful help.

- E** Relentlessly expansionistic gang boss, Corper marketing manager on a mission, Local religious zealot who brooks no infidels
- F** Local just trying to survive the conflict, Hapless outside peacemaker, Member of the crushed former group that used to control the area
- C** One or more sides are being backed by third parties, The struggle is emotional and based on deep hatreds rather than profit, The locals aren't affiliated with either group and suffer accordingly
- T** Cache of weapons sufficient to turn the tide, Funding "donated" by locals, Evidence of a traitor in one group's ranks
- P** Burnt-down community center, Neighborhood purged of opponents, Street with numerous dueling snipers on it



### Unexpected Heat

This mission is going to infuriate someone a lot more than might seem reasonable. Some part of the job touches a very tender spot for a corp, city government, or gang organization, and they will respond with seemingly outsized force. The sensitive spot might not even be the mission objective, but something somehow related to obtaining it.

- E** Corp exec with a top-secret project, Gang boss making an important secret move, City gov black project director
- F** Corp worker who's noticed something strange, Victim of the secret activities going on, Last surviving operator of the last team to try this
- C** The heat is actually going to come from a third party's activities, Avoiding the heat is possible but taking it is very profitable, The heat is going to turn former allies into provisional enemies
- T** Ultra-illegal contraband, Radioactive blackmail material, Critical corp data files that got here accidentally
- P** Ordinary-looking corp facility with heavy interior defenses, Hidden corp security dispatch, High-tech security facility hidden behind a front company

### Unlikely Ties

Two of the individuals or groups involved in this mission have an unexpected cooperative relationship. This may be due to blood ties, former service together, mutual friendship, or the current vagaries of the situation, but they'll work together in a way that outsiders wouldn't expect.

- E** Secret mastermind behind the pact, Brutal enforcer who's compelling cooperation, Hired killer being mutually financed by them
- F** Survivor of a joint assault made by the groups, Investigator checking out reports of cooperation, Deserter who objected to the relationship
- C** The ties will unravel explosively if a particular person dies or loses power, The organizations actually both share a single secret controller, The ties are extremely temporary based on the current situation
- T** Precious loot given as a pledge of alliance, Cache hidden by deserters who objected, Plunder seized by a joint operation
- P** Shared base of operations, Stronghold of one side with the other group present in numbers, Fortified facility being reinforced by the other side

### Unleashed Beast

There's a monster running amok during the mission, one probably just as dangerous to the targets as the PCs. This may be a literal beast in the form of a haywire cyber-animal or it may be some uncontrollably deranged ganger or psychotic cyber-killer. The PCs may be able to avoid it if they can manage to keep from drawing its attention.

- E** Prototype cyber-enhanced guard animal, Ultra-chromed killer off his meds, Corporate security chief sent to wreck things here by his superiors
- F** Survivor of an encounter with the beast, Relative of a recent victim, Past ally of the beast that regrets it
- C** The beast is actually doing the most damage to the mission target, There's a limited window of time before the beast is released, Nobody knows the beast is there until it's too late
- T** Some code or device that will kill the beast, Valuable stash left by victims of the beast, Precious trophies kept by the beast
- P** Horrific massacre site, Broken-open bunker that tried to hold out, Facility with everyone holed up in hiding

### Unrefusable Offer

Some person or group involved in the mission has been made an offer they cannot refuse. The consequences of denial may be obviously non-survivable, the pay might be irresistible, or the entity making the offer might be proffering something they want too badly to ever turn down.

- E** Expansion-minded gang boss, Corper exec on a mission, Kingmaker moving a piece on the board
- F** Group associate who resents the pressure, Local who suffers as a consequence of the deal, Broker who's heard about the bargain
- C** Performing their end of the deal forces them into irrational actions, Their lieutenants or associates don't want to take the deal, One side has no intention of coming through with the deal
- T** Up front payment for the deal, The precious object that is the focus of the deal, Proof that the deal is not going to be honored
- P** Tense club where meetings are made, Execution scene where a refuser was made an example, Facility being employed to carry out the deal

### Unwelcome Refugee

A person or group involved in the mission is fleeing a bad situation and the other entities involved in the job are not happy with their presence. They're either complicating the situation, an active threat to one of the parties involved, or whatever chased them out of their old lair is now pursuing them into their new location.

- E** Murderous avenger pursuing the escapee, Monstrous brute fleeing consequences, Gang boss forced out of their old turf
- F** Local displaced by the newcomer, Pursuing victim of theirs still seeking justice, Relative or associate of a sympathetic refugee
- C** The refugee remains tolerated precisely as long as they remain useful to someone, The refugee is biding their time until fellows or allies arrive in overwhelming force, The refugee is actually an infiltrator from a hostile group
- T** Valuables carried away by the refugee, Buried cache they left behind, The object they stole that forced them to flee in the first place
- P** Makeshift squat in the slums, Club for the refugees, New-built gang HQ or shop run by the refugees

### White Knight

Someone or some group is determined to solve the problems of someone involved in this mission, whether or not it's practical. They may be motivated by romantic feelings, old debts, gnawing guilt, or outside payment. The target of their help may be someone the PCs are targeting, an NPC tangled in the situation, or an underdog group under fire, but whoever it is will be problematic for the PCs.

- E** Hired gun with no concern over collateral damage, Zealously devoted follower who cares only for the target, Corper on a mission for their own purposes
- F** Former associate of the knight, Survivor of an attempt to stop the knight, Another person with the same target as the PCs
- C** The knight's intentions for the rescuee are not good, The rescuee is terrified of the knight, The knight wants to inflict collateral damage almost as much as they want to rescue the target
- T** Valuables left behind by victims of the knight, Precious object near the target, Wealth used in a futile attempt at bribery to call them off
- P** Broken-open strongpoint in the knight's way, Heavily-fortified facility holding the target, Decoy site with a trap instead of the target

### Upstart Gang

A new gang has complicated the mission by getting between the PCs and their target, allying with an enemy, or threatening something the PCs needed to protect. They may be a splinter faction of an existing gang, newcomers to the district, or a band of locals with ambitions of controlling their own turf. Other gangs may not take kindly to the new competition.

- E** Charismatic but dangerously unstable leader, Grizzled former lieutenant striking out on their own, Boss of a destroyed gang building anew
- F** Survivor of a recent encounter with them, Local being extorted by them, Disillusioned ex-member
- C** The gang is being used as a catspaw by another group, They're going to live only as long as the local rulers can't be bothered to kill them, They're providing a service or crime no one else in the area handles
- T** Payoffs from local shop owners, Plunder stolen on a recent raid, Hidden stash left behind by the former owners of their new HQ
- P** Gang HQ with newly-painted colors, Club taken over by the new gang, Site of a vicious clash with the current local gangs

### Wrathful Avenger

A person or group seeks vengeance, and their pursuit will end up complicating the mission. Someone or some group involved in the job is their target, and their destructive impulses are going to be as inconvenient as possible for the successful accomplishment of the mission's objectives. They may possibly mistake the PCs as being fellow participants in whatever group or target they have a grudge against.

- E** Lone assassin with a burning grudge, Corp manager with a score to settle, Heavily cybered survivor of an old betrayal
- F** Sympathetic member of the targeted group, Old associate who knows the truth, Luckless local who's just in the way
- C** The avenger is determined to destroy their target in a very specific and meaningful way, The avenger has no just reason whatsoever for their grudge, The avenger has been manipulated into aiming at the wrong target
- T** Sentimental object of great value to the avenger, The loot that was the object of their falling-out, Key item that will assuage their wrath
- P** Secret lair they work out of, Smashed site of their initial attack, Hidden location their target hides out in





# MISSION TYPES

Once you've rolled a pair of mission tags for your job, the next step is to roll or pick a mission type. You'll use the basic characters and situations from the mission tags to flesh out the type result, after which you'll use the GM tools starting on page 169 to elaborate the outline and detail any necessary infiltration sites or NPCs. Finally, you'll establish an appropriate pay rate for the job.

Each of the mission types are presented on the following nine pages as "one roll tables"; you can take one of each die type, roll them all at once, and read from each table to get a result. You then piece them together, keeping the mission tags you rolled in mind, and end up with a basic outline for the job.

You shouldn't use a table unless you actually need it. If you already know who's offering the job, don't bother rolling a d8 to find out. In the same vein, if you have particular ideas about the mission you should just put them in, or selectively choose results from the tables that suit your ideas.

When you put together a mission, keep in mind the other things going on in your city. If there's a likely tie-in between the job and an existing Scheme or activity, make it explicit. If you need an NPC for the mission, try to use an existing face or one the players have heard about. The more effort you make to use recurring characters and familiar places, the more lived-in your world will feel, and the more likely your players are to develop some manner of feelings about your NPCs.

| d10 | Mission Types                                    |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>Defense</b> , protecting a person/thing/place |
| 2   | <b>Espionage</b> , stealing a secret             |
| 3   | <b>Murder</b> , assassinating a given target     |
| 4   | <b>Rescue</b> , retrieving a captive             |
| 5   | <b>Retrieval</b> , recovering something lost     |
| 6   | <b>Sabotage</b> , wrecking a thing or place      |
| 7   | <b>Scouting</b> , recon work on a site or group  |
| 8   | <b>Smuggling</b> , moving contraband             |
| 9   | <b>Theft</b> , stealing a specific object        |
| 10  | <b>Roll twice</b> , one type turns into another  |

In the same vein, your missions should have something to do with organizations, people, and events that the players have heard about or participated in. The more your missions tie into the rest of your world, the more significant your PCs will become. Their activities will have visible consequences on the world around them, and that sort of impact is a very good way to encourage engagement with your setting.

Also, keep a mission's long-term consequences in mind. While corps are bloodless creatures that seldom hold grudges, individual men and women are going to form opinions and feelings about the PCs based on their activities. These feelings will not always be helpful to the PCs, but sometimes an intrigued bystander can be the start of a very profitable relationship.



## DEFENSE

The operators are charged with defending a person, place, or object against an impending threat. Things and Places can be taken from the Mission Tags that were rolled, while the Enemies give a good idea of the kind of opposition that the team might face in securing their charge.

When designing defense missions, keep in mind that the objective is not necessarily to kill any assailants, it's to defend something. Don't set up setpiece battles where the only possible outcome is murder; assume that smart teams will be trying to get their charges away from trouble in the most efficient way possible and leave room for escape routes, friendly reinforcements, and environmental complications that the players can utilize in their defense.

### d6 Why Can't They Do It Themselves?

- 1 They don't have the raw muscle available
- 2 Their usual defenders are not available
- 3 They've quarreled with their usual cover
- 4 They think this time the hit will be too strong
- 5 Their usual defenders are compromised
- 6 They just don't want to bother or risk it

### d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 A fixer trying to clean up a messy job
- 2 A loved one who's worried about things
- 3 A megacorp manager buying mercs
- 4 A minion who had the job foisted on them
- 5 A gang leader with numerous enemies
- 6 A harried community elder or leader
- 7 The person targeted or a thing's caretaker
- 8 A business owner foreseeing trouble

### d10 What Made Them Fearful?

- 1 Inside information from the enemy group
- 2 A prior, narrowly-failed attack
- 3 They have a lot of active enemies
- 4 Their vulnerability was recently made clear
- 5 Their usual defender is dead or out of it
- 6 The target is critically important to them
- 7 They have a sense of impending doom
- 8 They know they're due for a counterattack
- 9 They unearthed a recent failed scheme
- 10 They always get attacked this way

### d4 How Afraid Is the Target?

- 1 Excessively confident about the risks
- 2 Concerned, but maybe wrong in its focus
- 3 Expecting a very bad time ahead
- 4 Worried to the point of irrational behavior

### d12 What Needs To Be Defended?

- 1 Somebody with a deep personal relation
- 2 A very important piece of equipment
- 3 A vulnerable server that can't be moved
- 4 A very fragile art piece or prototype
- 5 An enemy deserter pursued by old allies
- 6 A critically injured and immobile patient
- 7 A building targeted by arsonists or foes
- 8 A leader being targeted by enemies
- 9 A client who demanded protection
- 10 A zone of turf being sought by others
- 11 A business or other active social site
- 12 A chokepoint that leads to a critical area

### d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 There's a mole feeding info to the enemy
- 2 The target doesn't believe there's a threat
- 3 The enemy is actually a different group
- 4 Someone close by would prefer they failed
- 5 Target might self-destruct if unmanaged
- 6 Target has a secret defensive advantage
- 7 Enemy wants to frighten, not destroy it
- 8 Current defense plans are badly flawed
- 9 Expected defenders aren't there
- 10 The opposition has unanticipated gear
- 11 The PCs could profit greatly by betrayal
- 12 A false alarm will happen while guarding
- 13 The PCs are actually guarding a decoy
- 14 The target resents this and is uncooperative
- 15 An "ally" really wants the target gone
- 16 The current guardians are incompetent
- 17 The target is overconfident in their defenses
- 18 They've misunderstood the real target
- 19 The assailants are on a strict time limit
- 20 The attack is unorthodox in its nature



## ESPIONAGE

Rather than stealing objects, the team is asked to acquire guarded data. The Complications in the mission's tags give some hints as to what kind of secrets or hidden truths someone might want to know about the situation, or you could always just make the macguffin a good old piece of paydata that the client wants recovered.

Espionage missions often involve a heavy dose of social engineering as well as potential heist scenes. If gunfire happens the PCs have probably screwed something up, and some clients may insist on a perfectly clean job with no alarms raised by the target. Sometimes the desired data is kept on a server somewhere, but other times the secret is simply a fact known by someone who needs to be persuaded to reveal it.

### d6 Why Can't They Get It Themselves?

- 1 They have no agents in place to do so
- 2 They tried and failed, bringing heat down
- 3 They're being watched too closely to act
- 4 Their best spy is currently not available
- 5 They plan to use the PCs as decoys
- 6 They're afraid of alerting internal moles

### d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 A corporate industrial spymaster
- 2 A traitor looking to profit from the inside
- 3 City official needing inside knowledge
- 4 Ex-employee trying to retrieve their data
- 5 Local elder needs it to protect the district
- 6 Internal rival of the data's guardian
- 7 Information broker with a commission
- 8 Conspiracy theorist with an obsession

### d10 What Profit Will It Give a Thief?

- 1 It's worth a lot of money on the street
- 2 It has directions to a cache of precious loot
- 3 A city gov will do favors to get it
- 4 A corp manager will pay a lot for it
- 5 It can hamstring a particular scheme
- 6 It has Access and info for a major network
- 7 It reveals a treacherous fixer or employer
- 8 It shows a great profit opportunity
- 9 It grants access to an invite-only business
- 10 It's of great sentimental value to someone

### d4 How Obscure is the Secret?

- 1 Almost no one even knows the data exists
- 2 It's known to a small circle in the group
- 3 A few rivals know the data exists
- 4 Everyone knows it's a valuable secret

### d12 Why Is It Guarded Information?

- 1 It'd cause disastrously bad PR
- 2 It's got critical secret product data in it
- 3 It reveals moles in other corps or orgs
- 4 It's got blackmail on a corp executive
- 5 It points to very illegal activities
- 6 It proves treachery against a seeming ally
- 7 Its theft would cause a big cash loss
- 8 It reveals future secret plans of an org
- 9 It shows secrets they got about a rival
- 10 It has control info for local gov officials
- 11 It would be humiliating to a major figure
- 12 Revealing it too soon would spoil a plot

### d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 False data was placed as a decoy
- 2 The data will actually harm the client
- 3 Someone else is stealing the data as well
- 4 The data is worthless unless stolen quickly
- 5 The data is only in a single person's head
- 6 Obtaining the data will hurt an innocent
- 7 There's unexpected info in the data
- 8 The data is kept in a very remote location
- 9 The data is attached to a precious object
- 10 An important figure keeps the data near
- 11 The data is only accessible at certain times
- 12 There's a key needed to decode the data
- 13 A copy of the data has been mislaid
- 14 Somebody in the org wants the data stolen
- 15 The data was stolen and hid by someone
- 16 The data is a unique physical object
- 17 Stealing it will enrage a third party
- 18 Its guardians are focused on a different file
- 19 It's really just a pointer to the real data
- 20 The data's in a dangerous ruin site



# MURDER

Straight-up assassination is an old-fashioned favorite on the street, but most clients prefer to offload the risks of it on hired help. There are countless reasons why one local might want another dead, but the Enemies of the mission tags you rolled are probably fairly high up on somebody's list.

Most high-value targets in a cyberpunk setting are acutely aware of the ease of killing an unwary target, and will seldom leave their house without some degree of personal security. Snipers can find it difficult to line up clean shots on such targets, and explosives can draw more heat than a team might want. Often it's necessary to engineer the situation so as to strip the target of their defenders before a group of PCs can move in for the kill.

## d6 How Alert Are They?

- 1 Completely unsuspecting of the threat
- 2 They're aware of the general risk
- 3 They think someone's actively trying now
- 4 They track multiple known threats
- 5 They're outright paranoid about the risk
- 6 They have inside information on the hit

## d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 An embittered ex-lover or partner
- 2 An internal corporate rival or enemy
- 3 An heir or other who stands to profit
- 4 A rival corporation's PR department
- 5 Vengeful partner of someone they ruined
- 6 A victim of their rise to power or success
- 7 A treacherous underling or minion
- 8 Someone they double-crossed in a deal

## d10 Particular Complications To Murder

- 1 They're often with someone very important
- 2 They're personally ferocious in a fight
- 3 They're at a very distant location
- 4 They avoid public activities and exposure
- 5 They're somehow sympathetic to the PCs
- 6 Killing them would cause dire blowback
- 7 They have multiple vengeful friends
- 8 They have a body double in common use
- 9 A recent hit attempt has made them wary
- 10 Escape afterwards would be very difficult

## d4 How Exposed Is the Target?

- 1 Under constant guard at a remote location
- 2 Is closely guarded whenever in public
- 3 Has guards nearby in sensitive situations
- 4 Is currently surprisingly ill-protected

## d12 Why Must They Die?

- 1 A mortal insult or offense to someone
- 2 It would ruin a particular scheme
- 3 It would intimidate someone else
- 4 It would make room for a promotion
- 5 It would solve an org power struggle
- 6 If the client can't have them, no one can
- 7 They're blamed for some dire mistake
- 8 They have debts they refuse to pay
- 9 Only they know a dangerous secret
- 10 They're blocking a plan from happening
- 11 They support a rival of the client
- 12 A private, obscure, inexplicable reason

## d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 The client wants them scared, not dead
- 2 It's very hard to get weapons near them
- 3 They're surrounded by zealots of a kind
- 4 No one's quite sure where they even are
- 5 The client's confused about the target
- 6 The target is constantly on the move
- 7 The target is wanted captured and alive
- 8 Someone else is making a hit on them, too
- 9 Their guards are not particularly loyal
- 10 There's going to be a gap in their guarding
- 11 Their death must be hidden for a while
- 12 They have a Rasputin-like durability
- 13 They have a rapid-response guard team
- 14 They carry a key to some great prize
- 15 The client's info about them is wrong
- 16 Their death would make their corp stronger
- 17 They must be killed in a certain way/place
- 18 Their assassins hunt the PCs as well
- 19 A combat monster guards them closely
- 20 It's an elaborate suicide by the target



# RESCUE

Not everyone working for a local employer is actually voluntarily providing their services. Effective slave labor is common, control exerted through drug addiction, intimidation, and casual violence, but there are also those forced to serve through less direct means. Sometimes a client needs somebody pried out of a situation like that, and the PCs can serve as the extraction vector.

A Friend from the mission tags is most likely a sympathetic subject for rescue, though some clients have intentions scarce distinguishable from the victim's current captors. Some victims may be reluctant to cooperate with rescuers, either out of paranoid fear, a cowed spirit, or a genuine enjoyment of their current role in their captor's plans.

## d6 How Were They Snatched?

- 1 Collateral damage from another clash
- 2 Targeted kidnapping from their home
- 3 A smash-and-grab of opportunity
- 4 Sold out by a supposed ally
- 5 Traded away by their former employer
- 6 Seized during a set-up meeting

## d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 Spouse, lover or family relation
- 2 Former employer wants them back
- 3 Old friend wants to dig them out
- 4 Different captors want them
- 5 The captive managed to get a job placed
- 6 A rival corp has a use for them
- 7 A gang or community group wants them
- 8 A captor actually wants them gone

## d10 Who Snatched Them?

- 1 Local gang needing fresh meat
- 2 Corporate "labor recruiters"
- 3 Local law enforcement had reasons
- 4 A former ally turned enemy
- 5 A selective corporate headhunter
- 6 Local cult or ideological group
- 7 Someone they wronged in the past
- 8 A would-be "protector" took them
- 9 A creditor seeking their payoff
- 10 Organleggers or worse traffickers

## d4 How Long Ago Were They Taken?

- 1 They were snatched just briefly before
- 2 They've been taken for a week or two
- 3 They've been gone for months
- 4 They've been captive for years now

## d12 What Use Are They To Their Captors?

- 1 They ought to get a considerable ransom
- 2 A secret can be extracted from them
- 3 They're a romantic interest to one of them
- 4 They can be used to pressure someone
- 5 They have a rare and useful skill
- 6 They know how to handle a corp or org
- 7 They're useful dumb labor or decoration
- 8 They were taken along with someone else
- 9 They're pretending to be too useful to kill
- 10 Their captors plan to sell them on
- 11 They have an odd niche skill that's needed
- 12 They're a source of entertainment or charm

## d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 They set up their own kidnapping
- 2 They thought this was just a normal job
- 3 The patron wants them dead or alive
- 4 They have a reason not to want to leave
- 5 The captors genuinely need their help
- 6 Their captors are ideological allies
- 7 Someone else is trying to assassinate them
- 8 Ransom was paid, but got stolen
- 9 They're kept constantly on the move
- 10 They escaped but are now lost somewhere
- 11 They'll be killed if not rescued soon
- 12 They'll be killed once no longer needed
- 13 Their captors are very solicitous to them
- 14 They've hidden loot somewhere nearby
- 15 They have a friend among their captors
- 16 They must be extracted to a specific place
- 17 Their location is dangerous to get to
- 18 They're injured and largely immobile
- 19 They won't leave without a friend there
- 20 They've obtained a position of power there

# RETRIEVAL

Theft is taking something its owner values, while retrieval is collecting things that no one presently owns. Lost datachips, crashed prototypes, missing experimental devices, mislaid drug shipments, and other valuables all await someone willing to dig out their current location and bring them back to a client. The Things of the rolled mission tags usually serve as these objects of desire.

The object should probably be something difficult to fence or utilize to its full value, or else the client wouldn't expect a team of operators to hand it over for less than it's worth on the market. It might be located in some occupied building or area, but the locals there don't realize what it is or haven't found its hiding place. Extracting it without notice may be difficult.

## d6 Why Do They Need It?

- 1 It's too valuable to abandon it
- 2 It's evidence they need concealed
- 3 A rival must be kept from getting it
- 4 It's key to one of their current schemes
- 5 It has great sentimental value to them
- 6 They need it for parts or data in it

## d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 Sole survivor who knows about its loss
- 2 Corp property retrieval department
- 3 Local scavenger with a lead on it
- 4 Gang boss who wants it for their gang
- 5 Local with an inside line on its location
- 6 The former owner wants it back
- 7 Collector wants it for their collection
- 8 A tech needs it to finish a unique project

## d10 Where Is It Now?

- 1 In a gang-infested urban war zone
- 2 Somewhere beneath the city streets
- 3 In an abandoned zone of the city
- 4 In the nearby badlands somewhere
- 5 In a chic hotel or upscale business tower
- 6 In a dump or other garbage zone
- 7 In an abandoned corp building or factory
- 8 On a former battlefield or slaughter site
- 9 Natural disaster site that never got fixed
- 10 Quarantine zone or plagued area

## d4 How Cumbersome Is It?

- 1 It could fit in a person's pocket
- 2 It's backpack-sized or smaller
- 3 It's man-portable, if only barely
- 4 You'll need a vehicle or porters for it

## d12 Why Can't They Go Get It?

- 1 The surroundings are too dangerous
- 2 It's too difficult for them to move or find
- 3 They have other things they need to handle
- 4 It's poisonous or dangerous to handle
- 5 They expect resistance to retrieving it
- 6 They can't be associated with it
- 7 Their enemies are sitting on it right now
- 8 They tried once and failed already
- 9 They're being watched by another seeker
- 10 They need it taken to a third party
- 11 They don't have anyone suitable for the job
- 12 They're not entirely sure it's worth it

## d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 It starts degrading when recovered
- 2 It's extremely fragile in some way
- 3 It's more valuable than the client thought
- 4 Somebody else already has claimed it
- 5 The locals where it is have no clue about it
- 6 It's been collected as worthless scrap
- 7 Somebody's using it in an unexpected way
- 8 It's in multiple pieces that must be obtained
- 9 It's tangled in some larger device or thing
- 10 It's in a hazardous building or area
- 11 The client only needs one part from it
- 12 It's got a dangerous secret embedded in it
- 13 A removable part is very valuable
- 14 It's tremendously illegal to possess it
- 15 It's government property of some kind
- 16 Its tracking device turns on when moved
- 17 It's among many similar-looking objects
- 18 It's hidden inside a living creature
- 19 It requires special gear to handle it
- 20 It's going to be ruined soon if not retrieved





## SABOTAGE

Some clients just want to see the world burn, or at least an enemy's part of it. The operators are charged with destroying an object, place, or facility, usually through physical violence or well-placed hacking efforts. A hostile Scheme might be the target of this sabotage, or a valuable Thing or object-related Complication rolled on the mission tags.

Good old-fashioned explosives may well play a role in a sabotage attempt, but a GM should keep in mind the Heat consequences of a team that goes in boom-first. Some factories or edifices might be so spread out that there is no single point of failure, requiring a complex plan to strike multiple locations at the same time, or set up some insidious process that will wreck the place before it's noticed.

### d6 What's The Motivation Behind It?

- 1 Economic; it's profitable to ruin it
- 2 Spite; it's revenge for something done
- 3 Distraction; it'll draw attention to it
- 4 Tactical; it'll create an opening to exploit
- 5 Social; it'll humiliate or disgrace someone
- 6 Strategic; it'll foreclose some future threat

### d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 A rival corp who wants to trouble them
- 2 A colleague who wants them hurt
- 3 Someone who sells or repairs the target
- 4 A traitor within the target's group
- 5 A in-group rival who wants a debacle
- 6 A past victim of the target's owner
- 7 An extortionist making good on threats
- 8 A gang that needs an example made

### d10 How Is It Defended?

- 1 Its operators or keepers are well-armed
- 2 It's hard to reach, distant or perilous
- 3 It's next to a major corp or LEO site
- 4 It's in an area restricted to allies only
- 5 It's moved around regularly
- 6 It's in a well-fortified location
- 7 There is a decoy site or object
- 8 Its true location is well-hidden
- 9 There's some dire guardian lairing there
- 10 Its destruction brings a grim consequence

### d4 What Sort of Thing is the Target?

- 1 A specific vehicle or piece of machinery
- 2 A factory, production, or research site
- 3 A road or item of infrastructure
- 4 An important piece of equipment

### d12 What Does Its Owner Need It For?

- 1 It makes them a considerable profit
- 2 It's an important part of their defenses
- 3 It produces a resource they need
- 4 It allows transit or ties with another group
- 5 It's got great sentimental importance
- 6 It's part of a daring new plan or product
- 7 It's collateral for a major loan they took
- 8 It's a sign of trust from a major ally
- 9 It's the seed of some great future plan
- 10 It's a critical component of something else
- 11 It's irreplaceable for a specific task
- 12 It's important to an ally's plans

### d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 It's currently held or used by a third party
- 2 It's only accessible at particular times
- 3 Its destruction would spread a toxic mess
- 4 An innocent is reliant on its safety
- 5 There are hostages kept near by it
- 6 It's a very tempting target for thieving PCs
- 7 It's spread out over several locations
- 8 It's abnormally resilient to damage
- 9 The client only wants it lightly damaged
- 10 Its repair staff must be taken out as well
- 11 It must be stolen but seemingly destroyed
- 12 The site is entangled with a different use
- 13 The site is keenly on alert for sabotage
- 14 The sabotage must look like mere bad luck
- 15 It's already partially damaged or ailing
- 16 Guard reinforcements are coming soon
- 17 The PCs need inside help to get at it
- 18 The target is underground somewhere
- 19 Someone just stole or seized the target
- 20 It's being used for an unexpected purpose

## SCOUTING

Rather than the specific datum that Espionage would have the team collect, the client here wants them to perform recon on a particular site, area, or organization. Maps, membership lists, diagrams, lists of forces, and other practical information must be obtained. In a more social context, the PCs might need to identify the leadership of an organization, or figure out the cliques and political factions within a group.

More physical recon efforts may involve going into abandoned city districts, crossing ill-understood badlands regions, or investigating mysterious black ops sites that have no public presence. The client will usually have a few specific facts they must obtain, but the more information they bring back to their paymaster, the better.

### **d6 Why Can't They Just Go There?**

- 1 The surrounding area is too dangerous
- 2 A hostile group there is keeping them out
- 3 They don't have anyone with apposite skill
- 4 They're spread too thin to take care of it
- 5 Somebody's watching them too closely
- 6 The PCs would blend better than them

### **d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?**

- 1 A gang looking to expand their turf
- 2 A corp looking for profitable intel
- 3 A relative of someone who vanished there
- 4 An info broker who has a curious client
- 5 City government needs it checked out
- 6 A rival group wants more information
- 7 A former occupant wants recent info
- 8 A hacker needs on-the-ground data

### **d10 What Crucial Facts Are Needed?**

- 1 A safe route in and out of the area
- 2 Locals willing to deal with the client
- 3 Location of someone specific in there
- 4 What the locals are really up to in the area
- 5 Location of something lost in the area
- 6 Whereabouts of a vanished local
- 7 What the locals have that's worth trading
- 8 Details of the local power structure
- 9 The facts about a recent event there
- 10 What the locals want or need most

### **d4 How Far Away Is the Site?**

- 1 Right in the same neighborhood
- 2 In the same district
- 3 In the same city or general zone
- 4 Somewhere in the badlands

### **d12 What Complications Exist?**

- 1 The locals are uniformly hostile to strangers
- 2 Extortion, banditry, or theft is common
- 3 A third party wants the place isolated
- 4 The terrain itself is very treacherous
- 5 A hostile group is hunting scouts there
- 6 The locals are extremely deceitful
- 7 A crucial fact is concealed by falsehood
- 8 There's limited time to scout it out
- 9 Things changed drastically there recently
- 10 The usual way in to the place is blocked
- 11 It's easier to get in than to get out
- 12 Dangers there are disguised innocently

### **d20 Twists to the Situation**

- 1 A third party offers pay to deceive
- 2 The place looks like what it isn't
- 3 The local politics are in turmoil of late
- 4 Outsiders are being sought there as mercs
- 5 Local groups are profoundly different
- 6 Existing info about the place is wrong
- 7 A third party is keeping people out
- 8 A disease or toxin threatens intruders
- 9 The locals are hiding something precious
- 10 The only source of a critical fact is missing
- 11 Local factions demand PC allegiance
- 12 A third party is monitoring the place
- 13 A mercenary group inside will hire out
- 14 The locals are finding it necessary to move
- 15 The current dwellers are newcomers
- 16 A horrible beast dwells in the area
- 17 The PCs need to find the last scout team
- 18 The client's real interest is hidden from PCs
- 19 Locals have reason to fear outsiders
- 20 A third party has moved in to take over



## SMUGGLING

Every city is going to want to have its share of the trade passing through, and taxes and tariffs on valuable goods can be crushingly high. Other polities want to keep certain things off the streets, such as vice products the local corps don't produce, objects that might destabilize local control, or goods produced by a competitor to the local ruling corps. Even so, it's not unknown for pharmaceutical corps to make their own recreational products illegal in a city simply so they can sponsor tax-free, high-margin drug cartels to retail their goods to the locals.

The team will need to bring some sort of goods through some sort of barrier: a city border, a watchful monopolistic gang's territory, a sealed city neighborhood, or a similar restricted zone.

### d6 Why Must It Be Smuggled?

- 1 It's some form of illegal contraband
- 2 A local monopoly keeps out competition
- 3 Somebody dangerous is looking for it
- 4 The recipient can't be known to have it
- 5 High tariffs make smuggling profitable
- 6 They're stolen goods for transport

### d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 Human trafficker with stock to move
- 2 Inter-city smuggling ring
- 3 Local elite with exotic tastes
- 4 Corp agent who needs a restricted item
- 5 Gang leader or crime boss with a need
- 6 Community leader in need of something
- 7 Fixer who needs to move product
- 8 Business owner trying to make money

### d10 The Value or Use of the Goods

- 1 It satisfies an addiction or craving
- 2 Low-mass, high-value industrial product
- 3 Precious raw material like gold or platinum
- 4 It's rare and loved by the cognoscenti
- 5 It's a critical repair part or component
- 6 It's can be repurposed for very illegal ends
- 7 It's a symbol of status or fashionable rank
- 8 It's highly immoral but very profitable
- 9 It has to do with medical needs
- 10 It's precious to a specific group or culture

### d4 How Bulky Is It?

- 1 Can fit it inside a pocket
- 2 Fits comfortably in a backpack
- 3 A vehicle trunk is needed to hold it
- 4 An actual cargo vehicle is required

### d12 Complications To Transit

- 1 It's toxic or dangerous to handle
- 2 It's going to spoil if not delivered quickly
- 3 The team has to find the product drop first
- 4 It's being pursued by rival forces
- 5 The recipient is being carefully watched
- 6 It must be hauled a long distance
- 7 The transit area is very dangerous
- 8 The border or security is on high alert
- 9 Somebody needs a fresh bribe to help
- 10 The goods are alive and need to stay so
- 11 The goods are fake and must be passed off
- 12 The goods are very fragile

### d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 There's another, richer buyer for the goods
- 2 A rival wants to bribe the PCs to go astray
- 3 The goods are decoys to draw attention
- 4 Some enemy has a tracker on the goods
- 5 The goods would be useful to the PCs too
- 6 It isn't what the recipient expected to get
- 7 The transit route changes unexpectedly
- 8 Bribed officials have been replaced
- 9 Local law enforcement is active there
- 10 A government official is involved in things
- 11 A gang leader or crime boss wants in on it
- 12 Somebody wants the run to fail badly
- 13 A sympathetic group needs the goods
- 14 The goods have been cut or adulterated
- 15 New "taxes" are on the transit route
- 16 A local wants a cut of the goods
- 17 A corp has taken an interest in the run
- 18 Another smuggler wants the shipment
- 19 The price goes down the longer it takes
- 20 The trade must take place in a public area



# THEFT

One of the oldest and most popular roles for a team of operators, simple theft is one of the most common jobs for hire. The team is charged with stealing something from one person or group and delivering it to another, preferably with the victim knowing as little of the matter as is possible.

Thing entries from the mission tags rolled for the job make good macguffins for theft, as can items somehow critical to the Complication of a situation. Sometimes the object to be stolen may be so bulky or cumbersome that a simple smash-and-grab won't work. Other times, the location of the object is uncertain, and the team may have to find it before they can steal it. In both cases, getting away cleanly and delivering the goods to the client may not be easily done.

## d6 Why Can't They Get It Themselves?

- 1 They tried, failed, and are now watched
- 2 Their usual spies are unavailable
- 3 Their superiors don't want them to do it
- 4 They're under too much suspicion right now
- 5 They don't have anyone up to the job
- 6 They will, but the PCs will be decoys

## d8 What Kind of Patron Put Up the Job?

- 1 A corporate industrial spymaster
- 2 A traitor looking to profit from the inside
- 3 Rival org member seeking an advantage
- 4 A gang leader needs it for their plans
- 5 An ex-employee needs to retrieve it
- 6 Fixer who needs it to finish setting up a job
- 7 City gov wants it taken without legal notice
- 8 A community leader or local elder

## d10 What's the Biggest Obstacle?

- 1 It's physically hard to move around
- 2 It's in a fortified and well-guarded locale
- 3 It's far away and hard to get to
- 4 No one's exactly sure where it's located
- 5 It has numerous well-armed guards
- 6 It's extremely easy to track
- 7 The theft's consequences would be dire
- 8 It exists in several separate components
- 9 It'd be stolen from the thieves very quickly
- 10 The genuine item is mixed with fakes

## d4 Who Else Knows About Its Value?

- 1 Even its owner doesn't realize its worth
- 2 The patron's own people know about it
- 3 A rival group also knows about it
- 4 Everyone knows it's precious

## d12 Why Is It Valuable to the Patron?

- 1 It has great sentimental value to someone
- 2 It has considerable raw monetary worth
- 3 It's the key to some greater treasure
- 4 It has a secret or blackmail embedded in it
- 5 It's crucial for maintaining their fortunes
- 6 The patron collects or prizes such things
- 7 An associate of the patron needs it badly
- 8 Its loss would gravely hurt its hated owner
- 9 It would hinder the owner's vexing plans
- 10 The patron needs it to complete something
- 11 It was stolen from the patron originally
- 12 There's nothing quite like it in the city

## d20 Twists to the Situation

- 1 There's a decoy target in place
- 2 Someone's seeking to buy it openly
- 3 Somebody's inspecting it right now
- 4 It's got a tracker on it that triggers if moved
- 5 Somebody dangerous carries it often
- 6 Taking it would hurt a sympathetic group
- 7 Another group of thieves are aiming at it
- 8 The owner has been tipped to the threat
- 9 A recent theft attempt failed badly
- 10 They've recently changed up security
- 11 Fighting near it is likely to damage it
- 12 It's physically attached to something
- 13 Its owner would rather it wrecked than lost
- 14 It takes a specific skill to extract it
- 15 There's a recent security breach about it
- 16 One of its guardians is amenable to bribes
- 17 A third party wants to ensure its safety
- 18 It needs to be delivered to a specific site
- 19 It's surrounded by valuable objects
- 20 It's rather carelessly guarded



## ONE-ROLL FIXER GENERATION

Mission clients seldom reach out directly to operators. Not only is it indiscreet, but most corpos find operators to be a largely indistinguishable mass of criminals, degenerates, and psychopaths more likely to shoot them for their shoes than cut a mutually-beneficial deal. A little distance makes the process much more comfortable.

The tables below let you create middlemen for these transactions. Some of them will be directly employed by corporations to broker their jobs, while others will be freelancers with the connections to hear about work in a timely fashion. Fixers are generally reliable as treachery tends to be punished very directly by their victims or their associates. Even so, even the best fixer is sometimes given only half the story.

### d6 What's Their Basic Background?

- 1 A street dweller made good over time
- 2 A corporate Mr. Smith with outside ties
- 3 Gang member of a middleman crew
- 4 Neighborhood figure of importance
- 5 Hacker-associated info broker
- 6 They had or have rebel or terrorist ties

### d8 What Kind of Clients Do They Prefer?

- 1 Corporate clients working against rivals
- 2 Gangs looking to get work done
- 3 Locals with problems to solve
- 4 Operators who need their own work done
- 5 Co-ethnics or co-religionists with issues
- 6 Members of their associated organization
- 7 Foreign agents of outside powers
- 8 Local gov agencies needing deniables

### d10 Why Are They Used By Operators?

- 1 They pay noticeably better than most
- 2 They give excellent mission info
- 3 They vet their clients very carefully
- 4 They can get plum jobs for favored ops
- 5 They match jobs and ops very well
- 6 Rival fixers in the area had "accidents"
- 7 They find work for raw newbies
- 8 They can get ops gear at discount rates
- 9 They can find work for unemployable ops
- 10 Their jobs are usually exactly as billed

### d4 How Established Are They?

- 1 They're a new face with little history.
- 2 They've handled business for a year or two.
- 3 They've been around for a long while.
- 4 They've been a face here for ages.

### d12 What Bad Rumors Exist About Them?

- 1 They burnt a team for a former client
- 2 They take bad clients on
- 3 They'll betray certain clients
- 4 Some missions are total screwjobs
- 5 They skim the mission payoffs
- 6 Info they supply is dangerously wrong
- 7 They burn teams that disappoint them
- 8 They hate particular types of people
- 9 The gear they supply is often faulty
- 10 They don't give the whole mission story
- 11 They're much too optimistic about things
- 12 They tend to get important details wrong

### d20 Style and/or Manner of Presentation

- 1 Sleek fashion, polished, and urbane
- 2 Vice den chic, debased and vulgar
- 3 Shabby clothes, wheedling manner
- 4 Dresses like the locals, affable and friendly
- 5 Favors armor, paranoid and suspicious
- 6 Gaudy chic, expansive and confident
- 7 Academic tweeds, avuncular and benign
- 8 Stale fashion, insinuating and implicative
- 9 Corper chic, reluctant to even be here
- 10 Camo and mil-style, take-it-or-leave-it
- 11 Junkie shabbiness, deceptively sharp
- 12 Avant-garde style, benignly superior
- 13 Threadbare fashion, earnest pleading
- 14 Defunct gang colors, casual and desultory
- 15 Last year's style, grasping and chiseling
- 16 Visible religious tokens, calm and mild
- 17 Clothes cut to suit scars, slow and labored
- 18 Dresses too young, forcedly enthusiastic
- 19 Bureaucrat gray, fussy and particular
- 20 Roll again; the style or manner is inverted

# CREATING AN INTRUSION MISSION

The stealthy infiltration of a hostile corporate facility is a mainstay of cyberpunk adventure. It can be a little tricky to build out a proper intrusion mission, however, so the guidelines in this section can help to streamline the process.

## THE FIRST STEPS

There are three things a GM needs to do before they can develop a good intrusion mission. It's not necessary to sort out every detail and ramification of these things, but you need to have answers before you can continue the process.

**Identify the goal.** What is it the PCs are trying to accomplish here? Do they need to kidnap someone? Kill somebody? Steal an object? Pilfer a data file? Sabotage a machine? The PCs may have multiple goals, or they may find incidental profit in stealing something, but you need to know the basic point of the mission before you can develop it.

**Identify the opposition.** What or who is stopping them from just walking in and obtaining their goal? What corporation, gang, or wealthy individual owns the site? What environmental or situational hazards are making this mission a challenge? By understanding who or what is defending the site, you'll be able to allocate defenders and stat them out in a logical fashion. If the surrounding area is hazardous, you'll be able to integrate those hazards into the building's defense.

**Identify the site.** For most missions, this involves picking a map to represent the corp facility, gang hideout, politician's mansion, military base, or other location that the PCs are trying to infiltrate. You can lift and repurpose maps from cyberpunk RPG adventures if you like, but one of the best alternatives is to just take a floorplan of an existing business. Modern architecture may not reflect all the nuances of a more dystopian future, but it's got bathrooms and functional coherence, so it's already one up on a lot of purely hypothetical game maps. When you copy these maps, make sure to have an unkeyed version on hand, as it's very likely that sensible PC groups are going to get the site's floorplan one way or another, and it's convenient to have an unlabeled map to give them.

## DEVELOPING THE MAP

Once you've identified the goal, the opposition, and the site map, you're ready to start dressing it out for the actual mission. There are three stages for this; developing and dressing the base map, adding security devices, and adding staff. The first step involves assigning the basic facts about the map.

**Label the rooms.** Write down a word or two about the use of particular rooms and areas in the building. Identify where the offices are, where manufacturing takes place, where clients and visitors are received,

and other basic points in the building's function. If the floor plan you're using doesn't exactly fit the facility's purpose, knock out some walls or sketch in some extra locations. Be ready to change these labels later if you need to add in a security control room or a VIP safe room.

**Place the goal.** Put the overall goal of the mission on the map, in whatever location makes the most sense for the object or person the PCs are hunting. Valuable objects and people will have at least one layer of obstacles between them and the unsecured outside world; corp execs don't get corner offices, they get hardened facilities in the heart of the building so that their competitors can't easily eliminate them. The PCs shouldn't be able to just smash a window and grab what they're after, unless they're after something the site owners don't think is valuable.

**Plug the holes.** Now that you know where the goal is, make sure there's not too easy and obvious a path to it. Put security doors, armored windows, inconvenient walls, and other obstacles on the floor plan where it might otherwise be too open. Modern office buildings tend to favor easy flows of people; cyberpunk office buildings like to make sure that nobody goes where they're not supposed to be.

## ADDING SECURITY DEVICES

Now that you know what's in the map, it's time to start adding security devices and planning out the location's network for hacking purposes. Don't worry about adding staff or guards yet; you'll get to that in the next step.

**Divide the map into inner and outer zones.** A building will usually have a lower-security perimeter area where clients, contractors, and other public contact occurs. It's not practical to lock down this area tightly, so the security will be less aggressive in this outer zone. Conversely, there are areas in most buildings where nobody but authorized employees are expected to ever go, and this inner zone will have much tighter security and a more vigorous response to intruders.

**Place the security consoles.** In significant facilities, there'll be at least one security console on site with a guard monitoring it 24/7. All the cameras, locks, sensors, and other security devices in the building will feed to this security console, and any disturbances will draw attention. Most buildings prefer to put these security consoles in dedicated offices that often double as guard rooms. Extremely secure sites will have multiple security consoles at multiple depths of intrusion; the inner zone will have its devices on a separate grid than the outer perimeter, so a hacker can't just sneak up to an easily-accessible outside camera and use its network connection to disable the inner zone's server.

**Mark the doors, windows, and ingress points.** Look at the map and identify where the PCs could theoret-





ically get into the building. Doors are one way, and windows that aren't armored against intrusion are another. Vents, sewer tunnels, roof hatches, basement ingress points, and any other ways of getting into the building need to be marked on the map and assigned locks or other security devices from the list in this section.

**Place interior cameras, door locks, laser sensors, and other security devices inside the building.** Cameras are going to be put in the ordinary path of travel, door locks are going to separate work areas, and laser tripwires and heavier security are going to be put around areas of high importance that aren't commonly traveled by workers. Remember that people have to actually work in this building, and if they have to do a retinal scan every time they need to go to the bathroom somebody's eventually going to do the security equivalent of chocking the door open.

**Place exterior security devices.** Draw a fence if it needs one, put sensors and cameras on the exterior of the building, mark armored windows or erase them from the floor plan if they're too insecure, mark guard checkpoints around the building, and otherwise dress up the immediate surroundings.

**Place the main site server.** Some facilities may not have a main server. They may rely entirely on security consoles, and have no significant anti-hacker defenses. Any site that wants to give hackers a decent run for their money is going to need a main server, however, if only to power the Demons they need to guard their networked security devices. This server will be located in a very well-protected part of the building, possibly in the same room as a security console. Valuable paydata files may be located on this server as well.

**Connect devices to the network.** Draw lines to indicate what devices connect to which other devices. Cameras may connect to security turrets, which probably tie back to a security console, which likely connects to a server. Well-guarded sites may have more than one network. In such cases, you should draw the connections so that the inner zone is separate from the outer, peripheral security devices. A hacker should need to physically penetrate the facility to be able to get close enough to touch the core server.

## STAFFING AND SCHEDULING

The next step in developing the site is to assign the sort of employees and security guards that would reasonably be there. Most sensible operators will hit a site at its lowest ebb of activity, such as during the early morning, and your staffing should reflect that. If the PCs have to go in during the afternoon shift change or similar business hours there will be far more em-

ployees present. If there are considerably more VIPs on site during the day, you can also expect guard totals to double or more.

**Place clumps of employees.** Put blobs of 1-10 employees in the rooms where they'd be working, with a couple in side areas doing minor tasks or shirking work. Ordinary corporate employees have absolutely no interest in fistfighting operators, but they can be relied upon to run screaming to the nearest security guard to report any dangerous intruders. If caught and interrogated, they're usually good for a crude map of the parts of the site they're allowed to go, a little info on security guard locations, and desperate pleas for mercy.

Note that some sites won't have these noncombatants. Breaking into a gang headquarters or the hidden slum temple of a frenzied cult might mean facing dozens of bloodthirsty locals ready to avenge the insult to their sanctum. They may be employed in measuring out drugs, worshiping strange gods, or "disciplining" wayward members, but they can be expected to be armed and eager to fight.

**Place static guards.** Put guards at obvious locations in the site, like the entrance, security console rooms, restricted zone entrances, main server rooms, VIP office checkpoints, and motor pools. Most organizations will always prefer to have at least two guards at any given post or patrol, as it's all too easy to take out a lone guardian before they can hit their security alert. These guards will generally be there 24/7, unless the location they're guarding stops being important at particular times.

**Identify backup guards.** When a security alert goes off, some guards will remain at their posts, while others will go to provide backup. These reinforcements might be drawn from existing static groups or they might be a separate unit in some central security room, ready to respond quickly to an alert. For a corporate facility, there should be about a quarter as many reinforcements as there are static guards. For a gang headquarters, everybody in the building might come running when gunfire touches off, which may create a whole new set of security holes for operators to exploit.

**Identify patrols.** During regular work shifts, most facilities rely on ordinary employees to notice intruders. At night or during inactive periods, security guards need to make regular patrols of the facility to keep an eye on things. Most patrols will consist of two guards, and the total number of patrollers will generally be about one-quarter the number of static guards. Determining whether or not the PCs run into the patrollers is covered under "Playing the Mission".

## MAKE A REACTION COUNTDOWN

Ideally, the PCs get into the building, soundlessly subdue any resistance, and accomplish the goal with no one the wiser. This is often an unattainable ideal.

If a site inhabitant manages to trigger a general alert, the site begins the **Reaction Countdown**. Start counting the mission time; at certain minute milestones, the local security will begin reacting in certain ways. The more disciplined, focused, and coordinated the locals are, the faster the Reaction Countdown is going to tick; breaking into a gang headquarters is not going to produce the kind of instant reaction that an assault on a corporate black site will.

Once the countdown starts ticking, the PCs absolutely must finish their job quickly and get out. Even if they manage to violently dispose of the site security, other corp branches are going to be sending reinforcements, and even the city law enforcement will eventually begin moving. If they can dodge the site security non-violently long enough the locals may not choose to send for bigger guns, but PCs seldom have that kind of trigger discipline.

The adjacent Reaction Countdown is an example of how you might draw up a response in an urban corp facility. If your site is hidden in the badlands or buried under the concealing rubble of a deserted district the time frames may be very different. In the same vein, if the locals are disorganized or have no pull with the city, they may not be able to call in more muscle than they have available on-site.

## FINAL TOUCHES

With the decisions you've made so far, you have a playable site for the PCs to infiltrate. Even so, there are a few additional steps you can take to liven the place up for their inevitable intrusion.

The adjacent tables offer some suggestions on twists, complications, or particular features that could show up in a facility. Some of these will make the job easier for PCs, while others could prove to be fresh obstacles to success. The party might be able to discover some of them through careful scouting or preliminary recon, while others could only be discovered by running into them.

In addition to twists such as those suggested in the table, you should consider putting additional loot in certain rooms or valuable paydata on particular servers. The total amount of these secondary rewards should be based on the importance and significance

### Example Reaction Countdown

| Minute | Reaction                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0      | Everyone in the facility freezes as the alert sounds on the intercom.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1      | Security patrols start moving toward their assigned alert posts. If backup has been requested or the alert doesn't have a specified source, the requested teams start moving to the point of contact or start searching for intruders. |
| 3      | Civilians finally start reacting, hiding if the alert reports danger                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 5      | Stationary security starts wondering if the situation is resolved; if they can't get confirmation from the alert source, they start searching in teams or moving to reinforce.                                                         |
| 10     | If a major alert hasn't been resolved, offsite corp security teams start showing up as reinforcements, going in through the main entrances and moving to support the staff.                                                            |
| 11+    | If the operators are simply running from corp security rather than fighting, the reaction countdown won't progress. If they start fighting back, however, additional reinforcements will come.                                         |
| 20     | If the alert's still not resolved, corp-sponsored city law enforcement begins arriving, along with heavy firepower.                                                                                                                    |
| 30     | If the operators are still present and not subdued, overwhelming law enforcement forces start arriving.                                                                                                                                |

of the site itself, as discussed in the "Mission Rewards" section starting on page 176, with the understanding that the PCs are very unlikely to collect all of it unless they feel like engaging the entire facility.

Speaking of which, the last step in the process is to make sure you've made or picked a suitable Reaction Countdown, so you have some idea of what will happen when the local security hits the panic button. The Reaction Countdown will give a general plan of response for on-site guards and make clear what kind of outside reinforcements are going to show up if the PCs don't complete their mission rapidly after triggering a local alert.



# PLAYING THE MISSION

Running a typical mission is generally broken down into two stages. In the first, the PCs take the job, investigate the situation, and formulate a plan for dealing with it. In the second stage, they enact their plan and make whatever hit, heist, infiltration, or snatch they've been hired to handle. While the methods described in this section are by no means the only way to handle these stages, a GM new to the genre can rely on them for guidelines until they're comfortable with their own style of running.

## THE SETUP

When the game session starts, the GM needs to provide the following information to the players.

- **Give them the mission brief.** Presumably, at the end of your last game session the PCs decided to handle this mission. During the downtime, you built your mission hook out into a full-fledged adventure. With that info in hand, this is the point where you give them the details that the client would logically provide: names, locations, known complications, and special requests. If the PCs have any questions, the client can be expected to answer them to the limit of their knowledge and patience, so give them a chance to ask them.
- **Give them an obvious first step.** A veteran group of operators will usually have their own ideas about how to advance a mission, but for newbies or the hesitant, it's necessary to provide at least one obvious way forward in the mission. At no point should you let the players flail for more than a few minutes; if they sound like they have no idea what to do next, make a logical suggestion that would be in line with what the PCs know.

Once the PCs have the brief and at least one way forward, you can sit back and let them mull over their options. Eventually they're going to decide to do something, and that's where to come back in to adjudicate the results of their efforts. A few types of situations are common at this stage, and some GMs could use a little advice on handling them.

## NEGOTIATING WITH NPCs

PCs often end up grilling locals for information, trying to cut deals for favors or gear, or attempting intimidation or beguilement on useful NPCs. When handling these situations, keep in mind that a PC with high social skills may not be attached to a player with an equally silver tongue. If you compel every player to be as persuasive and charming as their PC is, you're going to penalize those at the table who aren't so given to eloquence. The outline given below is one way to handle this potential complication.

- **Roll a reaction check for the NPC, as explained on page 182.** Roll 2d6 to find the NPC's basic attitude toward the PCs; are they feeling friendly toward the operators? Has something put them in a foul temper? A bad mood might complicate negotiations, but a group could easily flip it by giving the NPC a way to do something about the cause of their umbrage.
- **Let the PCs make their ask.** Have the PCs make their request. Some players will prefer to role-play this conversation out, while others would rather just say the gist of their request. It's best not to penalize the latter; just assume that the PC made their pitch in a persuasive way.
- **Let the PCs give a reason to cooperate.** Make the PCs explain why the NPC should cooperate with their request. Maybe they're offering cash, or favors, or are just so charming that any sensible person would grant their little request. There may well be multiple reasons for the NPC to accept the request.
- **Set a skill check difficulty.** Now that you know what the PCs want and why they think the NPC should give it to them, think about how persuasive their pitch might be. What has the NPC got to lose, and what are they standing to gain? Intimidation or brute threats might be a good reason for immediate cooperation, even if it leaves lasting resentment. If you decide the pitch was a good one, the skill check difficulty might be low, at 7 or 8. If it's pushing the limits of plausibility, 11 or 12 might be required. Some requests might just be impossible for the inducements offered.
- **Have the party face roll a social skill check.** Usually this will be Charisma/Talk, though if they're trying to get them to follow a plan or act on pure emotion, Cha/Lead might be in order. Connect might be used if the NPC was found through the skill in the first place.
- **Open an alternate way forward.** If the NPC isn't cooperating, that shouldn't slam things shut entirely. Maybe they need a better deal. Maybe they're not interested, but they're willing to point the PCs to somebody else. If this NPC is an important part of the party's plans and not just a side character, you should give the PCs some way forward that doesn't rely on the NPC cooperating with them. Parties that burn all their human leads and haven't got any other ideas tend to get frustrated, and frustrated parties do stupid things just to get a reaction out of the world.

This basic outline can be used for almost any NPC negotiations. Just keep in mind the essential parts: a request, a reason, and a random roll to fit it.



## GETTING FAVORS FROM CONTACTS

It's perfectly reasonable for PCs to want to get help from their Contacts or use them to smooth their path in a mission. GMs can use the guidelines below for determining just how much help a given Contact should be to a PC.

- **Contacts should open new paths, not solve problems entirely.** Players shouldn't try to use Contacts as "I win." buttons for solving obstacles. Even Friends aren't likely to put themselves that far out for the PC, let alone Acquaintances. Instead, a Contact should give a new way for the PCs to make progress in their goals. Maybe the corp janitor they know is willing to "lose" a colleague's ID card and uniform where the PCs can find it. Maybe the arms dealer knows where the PCs can find that gun that's too expensive for them, if they're willing to drop the gang boss who has it.
- **Contacts shouldn't need persuasion to do basic favors.** If the PC wants something from the Contact that isn't going to put them at significant risk or expense, they should get it. Selling contraband, getting inside information, or performing professional skills on their behalf should be automatic.
- **Contacts may need persuasion for major favors.** The PCs might need to bring their own inducement to the table to get the Contact to do something that might end up getting them hurt or noticeably poorer. Friends might be willing to do it, but a PC who makes a number of big asks without giving anything back is unlikely to keep that friend for long.
- **Contacts don't go on missions.** A Contact will not generally accompany the party on a mission unless their own personal interests are deeply involved. The GM might bend this for Contacts that are explicitly operators, but the party can expect them to demand an equal share of the take.
- **Contacts are usually usable only once per session.** Contacts have their own lives, and they aren't generally available to help more than once per game session per Contact.

Remember that Contacts are generally loyal, trustworthy, and useful people, but they're people all the same. PCs who take advantage of a relationship or who put their Contact in bad situations more than once are likely to lose their help, or even end up betrayed.

## MOVING AROUND THE CITY

The PCs are likely to need to visit multiple locations in a district to resolve a mission. How should a GM handle movement within the boundaries of the city? A few principles will serve to handle the majority of such situations.

- **Keep track of time.** If the PCs spend a half-hour driving over to a VR bar where their contact is located, note it down. If they decide to wait until nightfall to approach a corp facility, adjust the clock accordingly. Properly-kept time records let you know how much time the antagonists have to do whatever it is they're currently doing, and a team that takes too long to finish their mission might find that it has become impossible.
- **Most travel is automatic.** If there's no special reason that travel within the city is hard, you shouldn't make it hard. The PCs decide to go to the VR bar, so they go to the VR bar. Most intra-district travel will take about a half-hour, counting all the usual delays, while moving from district to district might take an hour.
- **Prepare obstacles beforehand for known locations of interest.** If you know the PCs are likely to want to go to a gang headquarters, and you know the gangs are watching the streets nearby for strangers, then prep a team of gang gunmen for the PCs to potentially encounter. Maybe the PCs never do run into them, or maybe they're prudent and can avoid them, but you have the encounter ready to drop on them if it makes sense.
- **PCs should be warned of known obstacles.** If the PCs would logically know about gang warfare in a neighborhood, or their client has intel that should be shared with them, then make sure they have it. If a trip isn't going to be as simple as swiping a bus pass, let the PCs know that they should plan their visit more carefully. Maybe they'll take a private vehicle with a well-armed driver. Maybe they'll try to find a back way into their desired destination. Whatever they do, don't let known obstacles become a surprise for PCs who should know about them.

If trouble does break out during a trip, the GM can shift things to mission time as described in the next section. Otherwise, a few words describing the destination's surroundings are all that are likely to be required.



## THE RUN

During most of the preparatory work, an operator team only needs to keep track of time in a general sense. When it comes down to the actual infiltration itself, or the assassination, or the heist, things are different. Every minute matters when you're surrounded by corp security. When you drop into mission time, follow the steps below.

- **Start counting minutes.** The run begins at minute zero and every action the PCs take after that point will consume a certain amount of time. The adjacent table gives some usual time requirements, but the GM should take the situation into account.
- **Every minute, look at the area's reaction.** If the PCs haven't alerted the locals, they're probably still occupied with their usual duties. If they're on alert, advance the Reaction Countdown and take account of their response.
- **Every five minutes, check for encounters.** Unless the PCs are operating in a truly uninhabited area, there's a chance they'll run into someone. Every five minutes, roll 1d6; on a 1, someone bumps into them. If they're in the path of a security patrol, it'll be the patrol. If not, it might be a worker, a shirking employee, a bored wandering guard, or someone else who should be in the area. If the PCs are under cover, the employee might not realize they're there. The chances of an encounter can be adjusted based on the activity of the place, so you might use a 1d8 or a less active facility, or count it a 2-in-6 chance for a busy site.
- **A new scene starts after each fight or after ten minutes of other activities.** For class abilities or cyber activation based on scenes, count a scene as starting anew after each fight or after the PCs have spent ten minutes doing something else. You can adjust this timing a little if you wish, but you'll want to be careful not to stretch it out too much or PCs won't get to use their per-scene abilities more than once or twice per run.

Repeat the steps above until the PCs have got what they came for and have departed the site. Of course, getting away can involve its own complications as well.

| Example Activity                                                                              | Minutes       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Pick a lock at normal speed                                                                   | 1             |
| Pick a lock hastily at a -2 penalty                                                           | 1 Main Action |
| Search a desk or container                                                                    | 1             |
| Search an office or room                                                                      | 5             |
| Sneak quietly up a flight of stairs                                                           | 1             |
| Rush openly up a flight of stairs                                                             | 1 Move Action |
| Have a fight with security                                                                    | 1             |
| Conceal a body somewhere                                                                      | 1             |
| Apply first aid after combat                                                                  | 5             |
| Hotwire a car or sabotage a device                                                            | 1             |
| Sneak 30 meters through an area                                                               | 1             |
| Sprint to any area on the same floor with no attempt at stealth and no obstacles in your path | 1             |

## FLEEING THE SCENE

PCs who accomplish a perfectly smooth operation can simply walk away from the target site. In the case that they've pulled an alert from the locals, the chase rules on page 43 and the following guidelines apply.

- **Standard corp security will not pursue operators.** The average corp security guard will stop chasing the PCs once they're out of the facility and out of weapon range. They don't get paid enough to rush after intruders, and even if they were, it would take too long for them to get to their vehicles. Infuriated gangers or locals might be more persistent.
- **Only response teams can be expected to pursue operators.** If the players stick around long enough for the Response Countdown to summon response teams down on their heads, they can expect those response teams to chase them. The teams have vehicles and often have pursuit drones to help track fleeing targets.
- **The more Heat the team has, the hotter the pursuit.** A team with less than 4 points of Heat is not going to be chased very hard unless they've stolen something important and the corp knows it. They'll probably be chased until the PCs lose at least some of their pursuers, after which the rest will regroup. At 6+ Heat, however, the team can expect to be followed until they've shaken them all or fought them off. At 8+, additional forces will likely be dispatched to hunt them down.

City law enforcement will not generally get involved in pursuits unless the corps call them in, and the corps are unlikely to do that without extreme provocation. Once the PCs melt away into the slums or can get out of sight in a safe house, they're generally safe from immediate consequences.



## AN EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Josiah, Morton, and Duchess have been hired to steal a prototype circuit board from a corp research facility. They've scouted the site beforehand and did a little social engineering to get a rough map of the building's interior and a good idea of the two different places the board could be kept. They decide to go in at 3 AM, when the fewest employees will be there.

Duchess parks the team's car around the corner and the three of them sidle up to the building's rear perimeter fence. As they're on-site now, the GM starts the mission time clock, with minutes recorded in brackets below.

Duchess checks the fence, confirming that it's unwired and unmonitored. [1] Morton slices a gash in it with his body blades and the team wriggles through. [2] They skulk across the open ground between the fence and the back of the building, avoiding the lamp-light on their way to a particular window. [3]

Duchess shorts out the sensor on the window. [4] If it's connected to a network, some Demon might be programmed to notice, but it's probably just a standard unmonitored shrieker alarm. Even if it's not, all but the most hyper-alert watchdog is going to take some time to send security to investigate.

Once Duchess gives the all-clear, Josiah hoists up Morton so the borg can cut the window's security glass. Mort does it carefully rather than just smashing it open. [5] Since five minutes have passed, the GM rolls 1d6 and gets a 2; nobody walks down the hallway while the team is getting the window open.

The team gets inside and carefully sneaks to the door of the first secure room where the board might be kept. [6] Since this is an important room, the team expects the door lock is attached to the network. Josiah patches his cyberdeck into the lock and hops into the associated net node. He can see the net connection in

the node, but there's no Demon present, which gives him a little time to work. He burns a point of Access and runs the *Unlock Door* program against the network's security difficulty of 9 and succeeds; the door pops open. [7] Duchess could've shorted the lock the old-fashioned way with an Int or Dex/Sneak check to get it open, but such manipulation would've alerted any Demon that might've been present in the node.

Once inside, they quickly start rifling the shelves and cases of the storage room looking for the board. This takes five minutes. At minute 10, the GM rolls another encounter check and gets a 1. Looking at the map, he decides a security guard from a nearby room is checking in. The guard catches the team red-handed and the PCs lose initiative. The corper slaps his radio, yells a panicked warning into it, and slams the door shut. He's not suicidal, and will wait for backup.

The GM now starts the Reaction Countdown. The PCs need to spend another two minutes rifling this room to be sure the board isn't here, which they spend in frantic haste, waiting for the thud of approaching security boots. [12] The board isn't there. It's probably in the other room in the facility. It's now minute 2 on the Reaction Countdown and the GM knows that the nearest security patrol is on its way while the other corpers are getting organized. The PCs can only guess what's going on.

The team decides to go for broke. They kick open the door and sprint for the target room. [13] The panicked guard fires at them but doesn't dare pursue them alone. When they get to the locked door on the storage room, Duchess slams it with a brute-force pick, taking a -2 penalty but succeeding in almost no time. If they can hold out long enough to find the board in the room and can cut through the approaching guards on their way out, they might just pull this off.

Next time, they'll spend more time on recon.





# MISSION REWARDS AND EXPERIENCE

Operators don't work for free, and a GM needs to determine how much a given mission should pay in terms of monetary rewards and experience. While much of this is a matter of art, there remain some basic guidelines a GM can use to set a suitable price.

## THE BASE MISSION PAYOUT

Fixers will tend to offer jobs that fit a team's capabilities; nobody's going to offer an extraction job on a megacorp headquarters to a bunch of green novices, and no fixer would annoy a legendary hacker with a request to knock over a convenience store. As such, most mission difficulties will be pegged to the team's average character level.

In some cases, you might have a job that seems a little harder or easier than is appropriate to your group's level. In that case, you can bump the base payout up or down a level. Beyond that, either the fixer doesn't understand the capabilities of the group or they're intentionally offering something they know doesn't fit the team's talents.

| Team Level | Base Payout |
|------------|-------------|
| 1          | \$10,000    |
| 2          | \$20,000    |
| 3          | \$30,000    |
| 4          | \$50,000    |
| 5          | \$70,000    |
| 6          | \$90,000    |
| 7          | \$120,000   |
| 8          | \$150,000   |
| 9          | \$200,000   |
| 10         | \$250,000   |

The adjacent table shows the customary payout for a job of a given team's average level. Below, a list of modifiers can be applied to shade the offer based on what kind of client is paying for it. These modifiers are applied in sequence, so charity offering a desperately important job that will take several weeks to finish would have a multiplier of  $0.25 \times 2 \times 2 = 1$ .

If the PCs are purely self-directed and are cooking up their own jobs, the base profit from whatever they're trying to do is based on the target they're hitting. Megacorp looting pays better than gangbusting.

| Common Payout Modifiers                     | Mod   |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| The client is an altruistic organization    | x0.25 |
| The client is a single unaffiliated person  | x0.5  |
| The client is a local business or gang      | x1    |
| The client is a megacorp subsidiary         | x1.5  |
| The client is a megacorp                    | x2    |
| The client has a bad reputation             | x2    |
| The job needs little or no mission prep     | x0.5  |
| The job will take extended time to do       | x2    |
| The client is genuinely desperate           | x2    |
| The client is unusually poor for their type | x0.5  |

## ADDITIONAL LOOT

PCs are inventive about finding valuables and you should expect your players to pick up any interesting portable objects as they perform the mission. Some of this will be ad-hoc, but intentionally placing a certain amount of extra loot is often useful.

| 2d6   | Extra Loot |
|-------|------------|
| 2     | None       |
| 3-4   | +50%       |
| 5-9   | +100%      |
| 10-11 | +150%      |
| 12    | +200%      |

To do so, roll 2d6 and consult the adjacent table. That much of the job's base payout should be placed in movable objects, paydata files, credsticks, drugs, cyberware, and other loot.

The PCs may or may not find this loot, and if they do find it they may need to fence it to convert it into cash. Any competent operator can find a fence, but these more accessible dealers will almost never give more than 10% of an object's value. Better rates require a Contact or other special efforts, in which case up to 25% of the item's worth can be obtained.

Some PCs will perhaps think to steal the weapons of their targets, or organleg their cyberware. While not impossible, selling these goods without an infrastructure of contacts can be prohibitively difficult.

| d20 | Example Loot and Paydata Files           |
|-----|------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Corporate industrial secrets             |
| 2   | Identities of secret corporate moles     |
| 3   | Blackmail material on an employee        |
| 4   | Hidden slush fund account numbers        |
| 5   | Unregistered mint-in-box cyberware       |
| 6   | Highly fashionable clothing              |
| 7   | Large stocks of food or other bulk goods |
| 8   | Well-known valuable collectibles         |
| 9   | Corp network architecture notes          |
| 10  | Details of a site's security systems     |
| 11  | Valuable artwork                         |
| 12  | Limited-edition popular consumer goods   |
| 13  | Historical artifacts with known value    |
| 14  | Large amounts of street drugs            |
| 15  | Negotiable deeds of ownership            |
| 16  | Secret cache locations                   |
| 17  | Employee-stolen products hidden away     |
| 18  | Illegal VR recordings                    |
| 19  | Emergency cash stash                     |
| 20  | Valuable tools or production equipment   |

## MISSION EXPERIENCE

A typical mission that is appropriate to the team's abilities and takes more than a few days but less than a couple of weeks to complete should generally award each character 3 experience points for a successful completion.

This mission shouldn't take more than one or two game sessions to complete. If it runs longer than that, add 1 experience point for each session after the first.

If the players fail, but don't botch it completely, subtract 1 experience points. If they make an utter hash of it, they get 1 experience point in total for the painful learning experience.

If the job is significantly harder than most, taking more time to complete or presenting a bigger risk than usual, you might bump the experience up by 1 point. In the same vein, if it's easier than usual you might subtract a point. Even so, the job has to present a minimal level of difficulty for the PCs to merit any experience at all. If the job's a trivial milk run for operators of their experience and resources, don't bother giving them any experience points for it.

As a general rule, it's best to give every player character the same amount of experience. Designing missions for a group of equivalent levels is generally easier than trying to keep in mind the capabilities of PCs at different levels of experience. If you do decide to give individual rewards for certain behavior, be prepared to deal with this difference in power levels.

## OPTIONAL RULE: CASH FOR LEVELS

The default rule for character advancement is to give experience rewards after each mission. While this motivates the PCs to take missions, genre purists may prefer to put a little more emphasis on the relentlessly mercenary impulses that are so common in cyberpunk literature. To do so, the GM can grant character levels based on earnings of the PC's criminal activities.

Instead of tracking experience points, each PC tracks their total earnings from missions, fenced loot, theft, extortion, or any other suitably adventurous undertakings. Cash earned through business deals, mundane work, or other non-adventure-based income does not count towards this sum.

Note that the payout for a mission is usually split evenly among the team members after paying for shared expenses. Only this individual payout counts toward a PC's level, not the overall payout or the money spent on shared expenses. If the PC can claw a few extra dollars out of the client, or persuade the team to allocate them more cash, then they can benefit by it.

If you use a system like this, expect the PCs to respond to the incentives. Working for benevolent but impoverished community organizations becomes a significant choice for the team, and they may decide that a fat payday is worth more than golden ideals. If so, they will be acting entirely in character for cyberpunk protagonists so that may be exactly what you want.



Mission Earnings To Gain A Level

| Level | Fast Leveling | Slow Leveling |
|-------|---------------|---------------|
| 1     | \$0           | \$0           |
| 2     | \$2,500       | \$5,000       |
| 3     | \$15,000      | \$30,000      |
| 4     | \$50,000      | \$100,000     |
| 5     | \$125,000     | \$250,000     |
| 6     | \$300,000     | \$600,000     |
| 7     | \$600,000     | \$1,200,000   |
| 8     | \$1,200,000   | \$2,400,000   |
| 9     | \$2,500,000   | \$5,000,000   |
| 10    | \$4,000,000   | \$8,000,000   |

The table above gives total cash earnings required for each level. The totals roughly approximate the same number of missions as the conventional leveling requirements for a four-person team, plus a margin for found loot and incidental cash acquisitions.

The PCs might stumble into a huge payday in the course of play. If so, a single mission can't do more than raise them a single level, leaving them one dollar below the threshold for the next. Thus, if a team of four first level newbies luck into a \$100,000 payday split among them, a fast-leveling campaign would leave them all with \$14,999 in credit toward their advancement.



# HEAT

Operators and their activities are a fact of life in a cyberpunk setting. If the megacorps were effective enough in their repression to crush such freelancers, there wouldn't be much of a game to play, so it's a given that the corps cannot feasibly get rid of all of the malcontents, mercenaries, petty criminals, and opportunists who might want to work against them.

Even so, there are limits to a corp's patience. Every major organization must admit the existence of a class of mercenaries willing to commit crimes for pay, but there is a difference between good, useful, reliable mercenaries and lunatics who can only be a liability.

This difference is expressed in *Heat*. The more reckless, destructive, and uncontrollable an operator team is, the more Heat they acquire. Eventually, they might become such a loose cannon that some offended party acts to smack them down.

Operators who keep their Heat down can live fairly normal lives even amid a steady stream of thefts, murders, hacks, and infiltrations. So long as they're working for a patron and following the tacit limits of the profession, even their corporate victims will prefer not to waste resources on crushing them. A trustworthy mercenary is valuable, and tonight's hostile infiltrator is tomorrow's temporary hire.

These coldly rational calculations tend to apply only to corporations, city government, and similar bloodless organizations. If the PCs manage to infuriate a gang boss or humiliate a specific corp exec they can expect to receive unkind attention until the situation is resolved. Heat is meant to measure a team's general reputation for professionalism; it's not going to matter when some specific NPC wants them dead.

## CONSEQUENCES OF HEAT

Heat is measured for the team as a whole, as operators get a reputation based on the company they keep. Only one Heat score is kept, and not individual scores for various enemies or victims; a shocking offense against one victim will still be recognized by others as a sign of dangerous unreliability or recklessness.

**Heat 0:** The corps will tend to actively avoid bothering the PCs. Any team that can operate this smoothly and neatly is an asset to be cultivated.

**Heat 1-3:** The PCs had better stay out of the offices of their victims and avoid their security crews, but the corps won't go out of their way to cause problems. Captured operators are unlikely to be killed.

**Heat 4-5:** The team has committed some significant offenses. They can expect vigorous pursuit during missions and captured operators are likely to be killed unless they can give very good reasons against it.

**Heat 6-7:** At this level, the team's enemies are actively seeking their death. At least one hit team will be tracking them and the team is going to have to go dark if they don't want to be ambushed. At this level, the team is unlikely to be able to do anything but deal with this pursuit until they can sort it out.

**Heat 8-9:** Not only are several teams hunting the PCs, but they're substantially stronger than before. Only a very bloody rebuff can convince the team's enemies that pursuit is no longer practical.

**Heat 10+:** The PCs have personally enraged a megacorp or city government. If they're not prepared to face down an enemy of that scale, the death of them and all their friends and associates is all but certain.





## HEAT GAINS

The offenses on the adjacent list are some of the most common ones to incur the fury of the corps and the local city government. For cumulative crimes, such as killing multiple unacceptable targets, use the worst penalty rather than stacking them all together.

The important thing to remember when assigning Heat gains is that the corps don't object to operators in principle. They know that if the PCs didn't hire on to do the job, someone else would have, and the way to stop the problem is to deal with the party's employers rather than stomping on every bunch of mercenaries in the city. PCs who do their jobs neatly, cleanly, and without collateral damage are actually useful to keep around, as they're less likely to cause serious additional losses through reckless behavior.

Even so, operators who throw dramatic spikes in a corp's operations can expect to get targeted, simply to serve as an example of why taking certain jobs isn't good for an operator's longevity.

## SHEDDING HEAT

Prudent operators take care to manage their notoriety. Certain options are particularly useful in calming down enraged corps or distracting them helpfully. Note that the methods below function for the whole team, even if only one PC pays the fines or does the time, as that sacrificial lamb can take the rap for the rest of the group.

**Laying low** is the simplest method. The PCs stay out of public and hide in a safe house or remote location. The first month they do this, their Heat drops by one point. They lose another point after two months, then four, then eight, and so forth. Thus, hiding out for 16 months would drop their heat by five points.

**Turning yourself in** to the local cops is another way to calm things down for relatively low heat levels. By doing so, the operator acknowledges that they screwed up and that they didn't intend to break the rules. Provided their local Heat is 3 or less, they'll usually get 1d6 months of prison. A good lawyer can make an Int or Cha/Work or Administer skill check against difficulty 8; for each point of success over 8, subtract one month from the sentence, to a minimum of no time. Once the time is served, the team's Heat goes to zero. If the operator's Heat is 4 or greater, however, they're likely to catch a sentence much longer than they'd like, and this method is not generally practical.

**Paying fines** also works to control low Heat levels, either as apology money to the corps or municipal fines. If the party's Heat is 3 or less, they can pay 1d6 x \$1,000 x current Heat to decrease it by one point. They may need a Contact to act as a go-between if feelings are particularly raw.

| Heat Cause                                         | Gain |
|----------------------------------------------------|------|
| Killing a city law enforcement officer             | +3   |
| Killing four or more city law enforcement officers | +5   |
| Killing a low-ranking non-security corp employee   | +1   |
| Killing a branch office head or equivalent         | +2   |
| Killing a regional office head or equivalent       | +4   |
| Killing a corp CEO                                 | +10  |
| Using frag grenades or small lethal explosives     | +1   |
| Using explosives to break through walls            | +3   |
| Blowing up a corp building                         | +5   |
| Blowing up an important corp building              | +10  |
| Causing large-scale property destruction           | +5   |
| Using lethal gases or widely-dispersed poisons     | +4   |
| Ruining an important corp plan                     | +2   |
| Ruining a critical corp plan                       | +5   |

| Ways to Lose Heat                      | Loss    |
|----------------------------------------|---------|
| Laying low, the first month            | -1      |
| Laying low, the next 2/4/8/16 months   | -1      |
| Turning yourself in to the authorities | Special |
| Paying fines                           | -1      |
| Free work for an offended corp         | Special |
| Paying bribes                          | -1      |
| Defeating a reprisal attempt           | -2      |

**Doing free work** for an offended corp or government can cool down even serious grudges. Most missions will be worth 2 points of Heat loss, though very dangerous ones might be worth as much as 4. This option won't work if the corp or government in question genuinely hates the party, such as at a Heat level of 8+, and the PCs will need some kind of Contact capable of putting the deal to the corp.

**Paying bribes** works even in cases of deep grudges, as the PCs find specific members of the organization they can bribe to distract it. They'll need a Contact who can locate these people or their own particular knowledge of the involved parties. To lower Heat by one point, bribes will run 1d6 x current Heat in thousands of dollars, doubled for Heat of 5 to 7 and quadrupled for Heat of 8 or 9. At 10 Heat, no bribery is possible.

Lastly, **defeating a reprisal attempt** is a good way to discourage throwing good resources after bad. Whacking a corp enforcer squad, bumping off a city SWAT team, or otherwise defeating their agents doesn't count as a source of additional Heat; everyone knows the score when it comes to settling debts.



## FACES ON THE STREET

Wealth, fame, and influence await the successful operator, but there are always people ready to stand in their way. Some have been paid by the corps and gangs that the PCs would plunder, while others have their own reasons for objecting to the team's plans. A GM needs a good selection of such antagonists close to hand if they're to provide a proper challenge for their table.

### A WORD ON BALANCE

Readers who are coming to this game from other game systems may have certain presuppositions about how combat challenges and fights with NPCs ought to play out. In many modern games, there's a basic assumption that the GM should not dish out fights that are too easy or too difficult for the PCs. It's assumed that combat is going to play a major role in the night's entertainment and there's not much fun to be had in throwing your PCs against a brick wall.

*Cities Without Number* is fundamentally a sandbox game, and so it has a somewhat different set of assumptions. In this game, missions are fitted out with the number and type of opposing combatants that the situation would logically recommend. If the PCs are hitting a hardened miltech corp site, they're going to be going up against heavy weaponry and trained soldiers. If they're sneaking through a gang's slum headquarters, they're going to encounter surprised thugs with whatever sidearms they have at the moment. In neither case will the hit dice or combat skills of the NPCs be specially calibrated to what the PCs can handle.

As the GM, it's your job to present the PCs with mission hooks that they can plausibly handle. You don't want to hand your players hooks that lead them

to their inevitable doom, or ones so trivial that they could accomplish the job half-asleep. But once they've picked that job or made that plan, the degree of danger and combat difficulty they encounter will be up to the choices they make and the situation they encounter.

You may have fitted out your corp factory site with a reasonable number of armed guards and drawn up notes on the forces that will move in if an alert is raised. If the PCs decide to raise a ruckus and then spend ten minutes arguing over what to do next, it's not your responsibility to save them from the overwhelming reinforcements that are going to swamp them. They can either run or face dire odds. By the same token, if the PCs are so slick and smooth that they never end up having to deal with more than one surprised guard at a time, it's also not your job to make things harder for them. The fact that they had an easy time with it is the natural reward for their good choices and clever plan.

If you let your combat challenges make sense in terms of the situation and stakes, your players will be able to deal logically with the challenges you present. More importantly, this logic will be that of the *setting*, and not that of the game. They're going to think about what makes sense for the situation rather than trusting that their character sheets can overcome four standard corp security encounters before the boss battle with the chief at the end.

Encourage this habit. If the opposition in a site or mission is radically different from what they're expecting, give them a chance to find out before they hit the wall. Smart players should be rewarded for a willingness to pay attention to your world.







## NPCs ARE PEOPLE

Non-player characters are people too. Whether in or out of combat, they have their own goals, own interests, and own esteem for the value of their lives. While a drugged-out ganger zealot may not care if she lives or dies, most NPCs the players encounter will be acutely aware of their own mortality. In the same fashion, these NPCs have their own interests. If the PCs are able to give them what they want, a great many hostile situations can be defused. The following pages include two very important mechanics that are sometimes neglected in modern games.

**Use reaction rolls.** It may seem easier and more logical to just pick an attitude for an NPC that makes sense under the circumstances, but those shortcuts tend to eliminate a lot of negotiation potential. It's too easy to assume that a probably-hostile NPC will just reach for their pistol when encountering the PCs, or that a probably-helpful NPC will just go ahead and be useful to the team without needing any further motivation.

Using reaction rolls gives the GM a chance to reconsider the situation and can let PCs get a word in edgewise before the bullets start flying. The average corporate security guard or street-dwelling thug has a lot of other things they'd rather be doing than bleeding out in a gutter somewhere, and most of them are willing to listen to alternate suggestions from the PCs.

Aside from that, reaction rolls also give the GM a chance to be surprised. Having your expectations shocked can be helpful to a GM at times, as it gives you an excuse to reconsider a situation.

**Use morale checks.** Many game systems operate on the assumption that a group of enemies will fight until all of them are dead. If you're facing ten goblins, it's assumed that you're going to have to knife every one of the little green devils before the fight is over. It's possible that goblins are so blithely indifferent to their own lives, but humans do not work that way. Only fanatics and lunatics will fight to the bitter end when the goal isn't worth their life.

And for most cops and corporate security, apprehending the PCs is most emphatically *not* worth their life. They'll take the performance improvement plan before they take the bullet. So long as the odds are in their favor and their teammates are still up, they can be expected to keep shooting, but once the bodies start dropping and the tides of battle turn, they have no logical reason to stick around.

Morale is the mechanic that simulates this calculus. A quick roll will tell you whether this NPC stays or retreats. Maybe he doesn't realize the rest of his team is dead. Maybe he's only thinking about his mortgage and how he can't make it without a good performance bonus. Maybe he's so tunnel-visioned he can't even see what else is going on. But if the dice say he runs? That's when his own skin is the only thing that matters, and a GM should run him accordingly.

Whether or not a morale check succeeds, you should always keep the NPC's motivations in mind. If a combat situation is obviously hopeless, only the most blindly loyal or desperate NPCs are going to stick around for the inevitable end, regardless of how high their Morale score may be.



# REACTION ROLLS AND MORALE

It can be tempting for a GM to simply decide how a group of NPCs react to the players, whether in social interactions or during combat. On the face of it, this is a reasonable tact to take; shouldn't a GM know best whether or not a group of enemies will attack the PCs or will flee from a particular battle?

It's true that the GM knows the situation best, but that very knowledge can make NPC encounters staler and less surprising to them. Rather than relying purely on a GM's judgment, it's often better to let the dice make their own suggestions about how a meeting can play out.

## REACTION ROLLS

When the PCs encounter someone, the GM should make a **reaction roll**. This roll is 2d6 modified by the Charisma modifier of the PC spokesman or face.

| 2d6  | Reaction                                 |
|------|------------------------------------------|
| 2-   | As hostile and violent as is plausible   |
| 3-5  | Hostile and unfriendly to the PCs        |
| 6-8  | A neutral or expected reaction from them |
| 9-11 | Unusually friendly or cooperative        |
| 12+  | As friendly and helpful as is plausible  |

The reaction will be keyed to the situation. A socialite braced at a nightclub who rolls a low reaction won't physically attack the PCs, but they can't expect much courtesy from her. An assassin with a good reaction might still be hired to kill the PC, but could offer to accept a counter-bid from them instead.

It's up to the GM to decide why the reaction worked out the way it did. The tables below offer a few suggestions as to why the response was unusually good or bad, but the GM can also work in recent events to justify a reaction. If the PCs just eradicated an entire street gang, their formerly hostile rival might decide that a policy of friendliness is now a safer bet.

| d8 | Positive Reaction Reasons                |
|----|------------------------------------------|
| 1  | They know a PC from somewhere else       |
| 2  | They need help from people like the PCs  |
| 3  | They're looking to earn a bribe          |
| 4  | They're intimidated by the PCs           |
| 5  | They're weakened and can't pick fights   |
| 6  | They're prejudiced in favor of a PC type |
| 7  | The PCs somehow solved a recent problem  |
| 8  | They don't want trouble right now        |

| d8 | Negative Reaction Reasons                 |
|----|-------------------------------------------|
| 1  | A plan of theirs just went wrong          |
| 2  | They're prejudiced against a PC type      |
| 3  | They're offended or insulted by something |
| 4  | They've had a terrible day so far         |
| 5  | The PCs have just made them more work     |
| 6  | They're afraid of being seen associating  |
| 7  | The PCs look like easy prey to them       |
| 8  | They just don't want to deal with them    |



## MORALE AND MORALE CHECKS

Every NPC combatant has a **Morale** score ranging from 2 to 12. The higher the score, the calmer and more determined the fighter is while under enemy fire. An NPC with a Morale score of 2 will flee at the slightest threat to their lives, while one with a Morale of 12 will fight until the last flicker of hope is gone, or to the death if their cause is important enough.

Some combat events will force a **Morale check** on NPCs. To make this check, the GM rolls 2d6 and compares it to their Morale scores; if the roll is equal or higher than their score, they break. What that means will depend on the situation and their level of training, but it always means that they want to get away from the fight as rapidly as possible.

**PCs do not have Morale scores and do not ever need to make Morale checks.** They fight or flee as the players decide, regardless of the situation.

### MORALE CHECK SITUATIONS

A group of NPCs usually needs to make a Morale check under the following circumstances. Other situations might force one as well at the GM's discretion.

- **One of their allies just died.** The first blood of an encounter can crack the resolve of a group, even if they're otherwise stronger or more numerous.
- **More than half of their allies are dead or down.** Most groups will have rationally retreated long before this level of casualties, but even desperate or oblivious fighters might crack at this point.
- **They seem likely to lose.** Even if they haven't suffered crippling casualties yet, if a rational fighter doesn't expect to win a fight, they may well choose to leave it.
- **Some dramatic reverse just happened.** If a CASRA suddenly swoops down and starts blasting a gang mob or their target wheels around to rip the head off their boss, the first instinct of the gangers is going to be flight. If some shocking loss is suffered the group will need to check Morale.

Usually these Morale checks will be rolled with an unmodified 2d6. A GM can tweak this slightly, with a 1 or 2 point bonus or penalty for exceptionally dramatic displays or ambiguous situations, but any modifier larger than that is likely to result in pre-ordained success or failure.

### FAILING MORALE CHECKS

NPCs that have failed their Morale check will seek to escape the battle as quickly as possible. The exact way in which they do that will depend on how disciplined, cool-headed, and professional they are.

Gangers, civilians, and common thugs will usually just turn and run, often dropping whatever they're holding in their headlong flight. If they can't get away they'll commonly beg for their lives, make extravagant promises, and be highly cooperative for as long as it takes to escape.

Soldiers, cops, ordinary corp security, and other professional combatants will still try to break away as quickly as possible, but they'll do so with more tactical sense. Individuals will only look to their own lives but if the safest way out requires that they shoot their way through, they'll keep firing.

Elite combatants or veteran fighters will tend to retreat as a group, working together to pull out of a fight they don't think they can win. They'll take the wounded with them if at all possible.

Note that if an NPC is convinced that only death awaits them at the hands of their enemies, a failed Morale check might mean a desperate last stand, with the NPCs blazing away until they're dead or have a chance to flee. A failed Morale check just means that the NPC now only wants to save their own life, so they're not going to surrender to a foe that they're convinced will kill them. For many gangers, a quick bullet in the head would be infinitely kinder than falling alive into the hands of their rivals.

### MORALE AND COMMON SENSE

Corp security may owe their souls to their employers, but they might prefer being put on an employee improvement plan to certain evisceration at the claws of a psychotic operator. In the same way, other NPCs will apply basic human reason to their combat encounters and will not fight when victory is hopeless or the goal isn't worth it.

Always keep the basic common sense of the NPCs in mind. They're not going to stand and die like movie heroes in order to protect a minor gang drug lab and they're not going to throw themselves into a meat grinder to avenge a petty insult.

In a cyberpunk dystopia, everyone knows that death is always near. A careless word, a moment of inattention, an error of judgment... it doesn't take much to bring down even the best. NPCs are not going to gamble with their lives over causes or situations that aren't worth the risk, and a GM should always play them with a basic respect for the value of their own lives.



## READING NPC STAT BLOCKS

Each of the NPCs and creatures listed in the following pages are given a default stat block. These blocks are meant to represent a typical person of their type; individuals will doubtless vary as the situation recommends. Each of the stat lines are described below.

- HD:** The hit dice of the NPC, along with their average hit points. If they're wearing armor that has Damage Soak, these bonus hit points are noted as well, such as "5 HP+2" for someone wearing armor with 2 points of Damage Soak.
- AC:** Both ranged and melee AC are noted here, accounting for any cyber or armor they may have.
- TT:** The NPC's Trauma Target is given here, modified for any cyber, armor, or Edges they have.
- Skill:** The default total skill bonus applied to any skill check the NPC would reasonably be good at. Thus, if a burglar with a Skill of +2 had to make a Sneak check, they'd roll 2d6+2.
- Save:** An NPC only has one saving throw, rolled for all types of saves. By default, it's equal to their hit dice divided by two, rounded down, and subtracted from 15.
- Atk:** The NPC's ranged and melee attack bonuses, taking into account any cyber or Foci they may have. An NPC's base attack bonus is usually equal to their hit dice plus a plausible level of combat skill. Some wild beasts may get more than one attack from a single Main Action. This multiattack is represented by a "x2" or "x3" notation.
- Dmg:** For creatures, this is the damage their natural fangs or claws may do. NPCs use damage of the weapon they're currently wielding, as noted in their gear entry.

**Shock:** The Shock damage the NPC's usual melee attack does. Shock that applies to "Any" AC pierces anything short of Shock immunity from shields, Foci, or some cyber systems.

**Move:** The number of meters the NPC can move in a single Move action.

**ML:** The Morale score of the NPC. When a Morale check is forced by events, they must roll 2d6. If they roll over their Morale score, they break and begin to retreat, surrender, or otherwise flee.

**Danger Value:** A rough estimate of the NPC's lethality in personal combat, as per page 193.

**Gear:** The armor and weaponry the NPC carries on a regular basis. Powerful or well-connected NPCs may use modded gear as explained on page 46. Incidental equipment is not listed; corp cops will have radios, first aid kits, handcuffs, and other minor items that fit their job role. NPCs may switch out armor or weapons if they expect trouble or are preparing for a major fight.

The cyber commonly owned by NPCs of their type is listed separately on the right hand side of the stat block. The effects of the cyber are summarized for easy reference during combat. As NPCs don't have rolled attributes, some attribute-modifying cyber is just represented as a flat +1 or +2 to Str or Dex-related rolls and damage.

The GM can generally assume that an NPC has enough spare System Strain to activate their cyber as often as they wish for a single encounter. In the same vein, few NPCs will live long enough to run out of ammunition or have to worry about how much System Strain their combat drugs might be adding to them.





# BEASTS AND GUARD ANIMALS

Savage guard dogs are a commonplace for gangs and street denizens, while even corporate facilities find use in well-trained guardian animals. Some go so far as to wire cybernetic implants into their beasts, taking advantage of methods and systems that would kill an expensive human employee far too quickly for practical use. Each animal is listed with its average street price for purchase, assuming a seller can be found.

Some beasts even have primitive “remote control” cyber installed for drone pilots to employ. Their handlers can’t provoke complex behavior, but they can force movement and trigger aggression instincts as if they were piloting an artificial drone. The more aggressively a beast is manipulated by its neurochemical harness, the shorter its eventual lifespan. This further encourages emotional distance in their handlers.

## Vicious Guard Dog

Costs \$150 / Danger Value: 2

HD: 2 (10 HP)      Atk: +3m  
AC: 13r/13m      Dmg: 1d6+1  
TT: 6+      Shock: None  
Skill: +2      Move: 15m  
Save: 14+      ML: 9

Systematic cruelty and off-label chems transform the canine survivors of the betting pits into marginally-controllable guard animals. Most are too savage to be kept around strange humans but when left to roam an enclosed zone they provide excellent area-denial services.

Bite (1d6+1 dmg, Trauma 1d6/x2)

## Cybered Attack Beast

Costs \$5,000 / Danger Value: 15

HD: 5 (25 HP)      Atk: +8m x 2  
AC: 13r/13m      Dmg: 1d8+4  
TT: 7+      Shock: 4/-  
Skill: +3      Move: 20m  
Save: 13+      ML: 10

A high-end animal guardian usually built out of a great cat or hormonally-modified wolf, these cybered attack beasts get two attacks with each Main action and move with augmented speed. Most are equipped with remote control harnesses for an associated pilot and put through regular patrols of their assigned defensive area.

Cybernetic Claws (1d8+4, Tr 1d8/x3, Shock 4/-)

## Experimental Bioweapon

Not Available for Sale / Danger Value: 48

HD: 8 (50 HP)      Atk: +12m x 3  
AC: 13r/13m      Dmg: 2d6+8  
TT: 9+      Shock: 8/-  
Skill: +4      Move: 20m  
Save: 11+      ML: 12

A bleeding-edge example of cybernetic overreach, attack animals of this grade are found only in corporate black sites or experimental zones. Most are insanely aggressive and all are studded with cybernetic fangs, monomolecular claws, bladed tentacles, and countless other implements of bodily ruin. They attack three times with each Main action.

Body Weaponry (2d6+8, Tr 1d10+1/x3, Shock 8/-)

**Veteran’s Luck (Edge):** The beast can use Veteran’s Luck  
**Killing Blow (Edge):** +4 dmg to each hit and +1 to Trauma

## Boomkitty

Costs \$500 / Danger Value: Cute

HD: 1 (3 HP)      Atk: None  
AC: 16r/16m      Dmg: None  
TT: 5+      Shock: None  
Skill: +3      Move: 20m  
Save: 15+      ML: 6

Fabricated out of common street cats or small dogs, a “boomkitty” has a crude remote control harness spliced into their brain stem and a deposit of plastic explosive implanted into their abdomen. While they serve well as inconspicuous spies and observers, a handler can detonate the animal as a Main action, inflicting damage as per a frag grenade on anything around it.

# CORP GUARDS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The muscle described in this section represents the usual run of guards and hired protection that the PCs might encounter. Small businesses or other marginal concerns will usually hire minimally-capable gunmen or street muscle to watch their property, while even the smallest megacorp subsidiary will normally have cybered guards on-site, with veterans looking after black sites and other sensitive locations.

If the PCs cause chaos, they can expect to encounter city SWAT teams or corp fast-response groups dispatched to the site of their rampage. Truly unlucky operators might face elite breaching teams charged with violently terminating the most dangerous and troublesome lawbreakers. At the top end, the only limit to megacorp elite guards is their capacity to endure massive amounts of implanted chrome.

## Low-End Private Security and Street Muscle

Danger Value: 1

HD: 1 (5 HP+2)      Atk: +1r/+1m  
AC: 13r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: 1/18 non-leth  
Skill: +1      Move: 10m  
Save: 15+      ML: 7

Guards of this quality usually have no useful combat cyber installed in them, as skinmod tattoos and gang-related dental implants don't count.

Reinforced Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

Club (1d4, Shock 1/18, non-lethal)

## Basic Corp Guard or City Cop

Danger Value: 3

HD: 2 (10 HP+5)      Atk: +3r/+3m  
AC: 16r/13m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 8+      Shock: 2/18 non-leth  
Skill: +1      Move: 10m  
Save: 14+      ML: 8

**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

Light Armored Suit

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

Advanced Club (1d8, Shock 2/18, non-lethal)

## Veteran Corp Guard/City Cop or SWAT Team

Danger Value: 5

HD: 3 (15 HP+5)      Atk: +5r/+4m  
AC: 17r/14m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 8+      Shock: 2/18 non-leth  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 14+      ML: 9

**Coordination Augment I (Nerve):** +1 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls

**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

Light Armored Suit

Heavy Pistol (1d8+1, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

Advanced Club (1d8, Shock 2/18, non-lethal)

## Response Team Commander or SWAT Captain

Danger Value: 16

HD: 4 (20 HP+10)      Atk: +7r/+6m  
AC: 19r/15m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 8+      Shock: 3/15  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 13+      ML: 10

**Coordination Augment I (Nerve):** +1 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls

**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection

**Enhanced Reflexes I (Nerve):** Once/scene as an On Turn, gain a bonus Main action.

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

Medium Armored Suit

Combat Rifle (1d12+1, Tr. 1d8/x3, 30 mag, burst)

Advanced Knife (1d6+1, Shock 3/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Breaching Team Member**

Danger Value: 12

HD: 3 (15 HP+15)      Atk: +5r/+6m  
 AC: 21r/19m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 9+      Shock: 5/15  
 Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
 Save: 14+      ML: 9  
 Heavy Armored Suit  
 Combat Shotgun (3d4, Tr. 1d10/x3, 12 mag, burst)  
 3 flash grenades/3 frag (2d6, Trauma 1d8/x3)

**Body Blades II (Limb):** 2d6+1 melee, Shock 5/15, Trauma 1d10/x3  
**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection  
**Eye Mod/Low Light Vision (Sensory):** Sees in low light  
**Enhanced Reflexes I (Nerve):** Once/scene as an On Turn action gain a bonus Main action  
**Muscle Fiber Replacement I (Limb):** Effective +1 Str mod for hit/damage/Shock  
**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.

**Breaching Team Commander**

Danger Value: 45

HD: 5 (25 HP+15)      Atk: +8r/+10m  
 AC: 21r/19m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 9+      Shock: 8/Any  
 Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
 Save: 13+      ML: 10  
 Heavy Armored Suit  
 Combat Shotgun (3d4, Tr. 1d10/x3, 12 mag, burst)  
 3 flash grenades/3 frag (2d6, Trauma 1d8/x3)

**Body Blades II (Limb):** Base 2d6+4 melee, Shock 8/Any, Trauma 1d10/x3  
**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection  
**Eye Mod/Low Light Vision (Sensory):** Sees in low light  
**Enhanced Reflexes II (Nerve):** Once/scene as an Instant action gain a bonus Main and Move action  
**Muscle Fiber Replacement II (Limb):** Effective +2 Str mod for hit/damage/Shock and feats of great strength  
**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.  
**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge  
**Armsmaster (Focus):** Armsmaster-2 Focus benefits.

**Corp or LEO Elite Sniper**

Danger Value: 54

HD: 6 (30 HP+10)      Atk: +11r/+8m  
 AC: 21r/19m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 8+      Shock: 4/15  
 Skill: +3      Move: 10m  
 Save: 12+      ML: 10  
 Medium Armored Suit  
 Modded Sniper Rifle (2d8+7, Tr. 1d10/x4, 1 mag)  
 Modded Heavy Pistol (1d8+7, Tr. 1d6/x3, 8 mag)  
 Advanced Knife (1d6+2, Shock 4/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Coordination Augment II (Nerve):** +2 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls, +10m Move  
**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection  
**Enhanced Reflexes II (Nerve):** Once/scene as an Instant, gain a bonus Main and Move action.  
**Eye Mod/Infrared Vision:** Can see in infrared  
**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.  
**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.  
**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge  
**Deadeye (Focus):** Deadeye-2 Focus benefits

**Megacorp CEO's Personal Guard**

Danger Value: 200

HD: 10 (80 HP)      Atk: +17r/+19m  
 AC: 22r/22m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 8+      Shock: 15/Any  
 Skill: +4      Move: 20m  
 Save: 10+      ML: 12  
 Ridiculously Expensive Suit  
 Modded Light Pistol (1d6+10, Tr. 1d8+1/x2, 15 mag),  
 3 flash grenades/3 frag (2d6+5, Trauma 1d8+1/x3)

**Body Blades II (Limb):** Base 2d6+11 melee, Shock 15/Any, Trauma 1d10+1/x3  
**Coordination Augment II (Nerve):** +2 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls, +10m Move  
**Cyberears/eyes (Sensory):** Integral noise and flash protect  
**Dermal Armor III (Skin):** AC 20, ignore first Shock/round  
**Ear Mod/Positional Detection (Sensory):** Map sounds  
**Eye Mod/Low Light Vision (Sensory):** Sees in low light  
**Enhanced Reflexes III (Nerve):** Twice/scene as an Instant action gain a bonus Main and Move action  
**Iron Hand Aegis (Limb):** Once/scene, deflect a ranged hit  
**Muscle Fiber Replacement II (Limb):** Effective +2 Str mod for hit/damage/Shock and feats of great strength  
**Reaction Booster II (Nerve):** Automatically win initiative  
**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.  
**Killing Blow (Edge):** +1 to Trauma Dice, +5 to all damage  
**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge  
**Armsmaster (Focus):** Armsmaster-2 Focus benefits.



# GANGERS AND CRIMINALS

While less well-funded than corporate muscle or city government enforcers, street gangs make up in numbers what they lack in financing. The poorest mobs make do with homemade knives and zip guns, while the princes of the city finance entire production runs of high-end weaponry to settle their disagreements. The corps are happy to sell to them, so long as they don't get in the way of their business.

Aside from gang-affiliated fighters, the PCs might also run into assassins or other hired killers. The common run of these hit men are scarcely distinguishable from any other thug with a pistol, but those who manage to earn a name can be expected to have a great deal of cutting-edge chrome implanted. The greatest of them can end up more metal than flesh, all in pursuit of a more perfect kill.

## Unaffiliated Street Thug

Danger Value: 1

HD: 1 (5 HP)      Atk: +1r/+1m  
AC: 10r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: 1/15  
Skill: +1      Move: 10m  
Save: 15+      ML: 7

Lacking any gang support, these disposable thugs rarely have any significant cyber.

Ordinary Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

Knife (1d4, Shock 1/15, Trauma 1d6/x3)

## Gang Member

Danger Value: 2

HD: 1 (5 HP+3)      Atk: +1r/+1m  
AC: 13r/12m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: 1/15  
Skill: +1      Move: 10m  
Save: 15+      ML: 8

Depending on the wealth and cyber-enthusiasm of the gang, an average member might have one cheap system.

**Body Blades I (Limb):** 1d8 dmg, Shock 2/15, Trauma 1d8/x3  
**Cybereyes and Eye Mod/Infrared (Sensory):** Flash protection and the ability to see infrared

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

**Shock Fists (Limb):** +1d8 unarmed damage

Street Leathers

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

Knife (1d4, Shock 1/15, Trauma 1d6/x3)

## Veteran Gang Gunman

Danger Value: 4

HD: 3 (15 HP+3)      Atk: +6r/+6m  
AC: 14r/13m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: 2/15  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 14+      ML: 8

**Coordination Augment I (Nerve):** +1 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

Street Leathers

Combat Rifle (1d12+1, Tr. 1d8/x3, 30 mag, burst)

Knife (1d4+1, Shock 2/15, Trauma 1d6/x3)

## Veteran Gang Bruiser

Danger Value: 4

HD: 3 (15 HP+5)      Atk: +4r/+6m  
AC: 13r/14m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: 3/15  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 14+      ML: 8

**Body Blades I (Limb):** 1d8+1 dmg, Shock 3/15, Trauma 1d8/x3

**Muscle Fiber Replacement I (Limb):** Effective +1 Str mod for hit/damage/Shock

War Harness

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Gang Lieutenant or Minor Boss**

Danger Value: 18

HD: 6 (30 HP+5)      Atk: +9r/+10m  
 AC: 16r/14m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 7+      Shock: 8/Any  
 Skill: +3      Move: 10m  
 Save: 12+      ML: 10

Armored Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Body Blades II (Limb):** 2d6+4 melee, Shock 8/Any, Trauma 1d10/x3

**Enhanced Reflexes I (Nerve):** Once/scene as an On Turn action gain a bonus Main action

**Muscle Fiber Replacement I (Limb):** Effective +1 Str mod for hit/damage/Shock

**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge

**Armsmaster (Focus):** Armsmaster-2 Focus benefits.

**Major Gang Boss**

Danger Value: 48

HD: 8 (40 HP+10)      Atk: +13r/+11m  
 AC: 21r/19m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 7+      Shock: 7/15  
 Skill: +3      Move: 20m  
 Save: 11+      ML: 11

Modded Armored Clothing

Modded Heavy Pistol (1d8+8, Tr. 1d6+1/x3, 8 mag)

Advanced Knife (1d6+3, Trauma 1d8+1/x3)

**Coordination Augment II (Nerve):** +2 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls, +10m Move

**Enhanced Reflexes II (Nerve):** Once/scene as an Instant, gain a bonus Main and Move action.

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

**Reaction Booster II (Nerve):** Automatically win initiative

**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge

**Deadeye (Focus):** Deadeye-2 Focus benefits.

**Mid-Level Professional Assassin**

Danger Value: 54

HD: 6 (30 HP+5)      Atk: +11r/+9m  
 AC: 18r/16m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 7+      Shock: 4/15  
 Skill: +3      Move: 10m  
 Save: 12+      ML: 10

Armored Clothing

Modded Light Pistol (1d6+8, Tr. 1d8+1/x2, 15 mag)

Advanced Knife (1d6+2, Shock 4/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Coordination Augment II (Nerve):** +2 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls, +10m Move

**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection

**Enhanced Reflexes II (Nerve):** Once/scene as an Instant, gain a bonus Main and Move action.

**Eye Mod/Infrared Vision:** Can see in infrared

**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.

**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.

**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge

**Deadeye (Focus):** Deadeye-2 Focus benefits

**Legendary Hired Killer**

Danger Value: 200

HD: 10 (80 HP)      Atk: +17r/+15m  
 AC: 21r/19m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 8+      Shock: 9/15  
 Skill: +4      Move: 20m  
 Save: 10+      ML: 12

Modded Armored Clothing

Modded Light Pistol (1d6+14, Tr. 1d8+1/x2, 15 mag)

Advanced Knife (1d6+2, Shock 9/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Coordination Augment II (Nerve):** +2 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls, +10m Move

**Cybereyes/ears (Sensory):** Integral flash/noise protection

**Enhanced Reflexes III (Nerve):** Twice/scene as an Instant action gain a bonus Main and Move action

**Eye Mod/Flechette Launcher (Head):** Surprise Light Pistol attack that does double dmg on hit, regular on miss

**Eye Mod/Impostor (Sensory):** Fake a retinal pattern

**Eye Mod/Infrared Vision (Sensory):** Has IR vision

**Eye Mod/Zoom (Sensory):** Can see clearly up to 500m

**Reaction Booster II (Nerve):** Automatically win initiative

**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.

**Hard to Kill (Edge):** +2 HP/HD, +1 Trauma Target

**Killing Blow (Edge):** +1 to Trauma Dice, +5 to all damage

**Veteran's Luck (Edge):** Can use the Veteran's Luck Edge

**Deadeye (Focus):** Deadeye-2 Focus benefits.

# HACKERS AND PILOTS

Infiltration jobs sometimes require facing corporate watchdog hackers, whether in cyberspace or in the living flesh. The statistics here are for a general range of watchdogs and their usual hardware.

Most hackers are terrible meatspace combatants, though the anti-cyber specialists of corporate breaching teams can be a nasty surprise for heavily chromed PCs.

The watchdogs are listed with their usual cyberdecks and program loadouts. Larcenous PCs should know that corporate decks are so riddled with spy hardware that there's almost never any profit in looting them. Freelancers might have something worth stealing, however.

Along with the selection of hackers, a number of example drone pilots are included for encounters.

## Small-Time Corper Code Drone

Danger Value: 1

HD: 1 (5 HP)      Atk: +0r/+0m  
AC: 10r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: None  
Skill: +1      Move: 10m  
Save: 15+      ML: 7

Ordinary Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 10, Shielding 10, CPU 3 with verbs *Defend, Paralyze, Stun, Lock, Terminate* and subjects *Avatar, Barrier, Camera, Door, Program*

## Experienced Corporate Watchdog

Danger Value: 2

HD: 2 (10 HP)      Atk: +1r/+1m  
AC: 10r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: None  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 14+      ML: 8

Ordinary Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 14, Shielding 10, CPU 3 with verbs *Defend, Paralyze, Sense, Silence, Stun, Lock, Terminate* and subjects *Avatar, Barrier, Camera, Door, Program*

## Veteran Corporate IT Security

Danger Value: 4

HD: 4 (20 HP)      Atk: +2r/+2m  
AC: 10r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 6+      Shock: None  
Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
Save: 13+      ML: 8

Ordinary Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Neural Buffer:** Adds +12 HP vs. cyberspace damage  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 14, Shielding 10, CPU 3 with verbs *Defend, Paralyze, Sense, Silence, Stun, Lock, Terminate* and subjects *Avatar, Barrier, Camera, Door, Program*

## Corporate Breach Team Anti-Cyber Operator

Danger Value: 15

HD: 4 (20 HP+15)      Atk: +6r/+6m  
AC: 20r/18m      Dmg: Wpn  
TT: 9+      Shock: None  
Skill: +4      Move: 10m  
Save: 13+      ML: 9

Heavy Armored Suit

Combat Shotgun (3d4, Tr. 1d10/x3, 12 mag, burst)

3 flash grenades/3 frag (2d6, Trauma 1d8/x3)

Advanced Knife (1d6, Trauma 1d8/x3)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection  
**Eye Mod/Low Light Vision (Sensory):** Sees in low light  
**Enhanced Reflexes I (Nerve):** Once/scene as an On Turn action gain a bonus Main action  
**Stick Pads (Limb):** Climb sheer surfaces at Move rate.  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 15, Shielding 0, CPU 5 with verbs *Blind, Deactivate, Frisk, Glitch, Sabotage, Sense* and subjects *Cyber, Body Cyber, Nerve Cyber, Limb Cyber, Sensory Cyber, Skin Cyber, Enhanced Reflexes I, Enhanced Reflexes II, Enhanced Reflexes III*



**High-End Corporate IT Talent**

Danger Value: 9

HD: 6 (30 HP)      Atk: +2r/+2m  
 AC: 10r/10m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 6+      Shock: None  
 Skill: +5      Move: 10m  
 Save: 12+      ML: 8

Ordinary Clothing

Heavy Pistol (1d8, Trauma 1d6/x3, 8 mag)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Neural Buffer:** Adds +18 HP vs. cyberspace damage  
**Reaction Booster II (Nerve):** Automatically win initiative  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 17, Shielding 10, CPU 4 with verbs  
*Defend, Glitch, Kill, Paralyze, Sense, Sabotage, Silence, Stun, Lock, Terminate* and subjects *Avatar, Barrier, Cyber, Camera, Door, Program*  
**Hacker (Edge):** Can use the Hacker Edge

**Dire Legend of the Net**

Danger Value: 65

HD: 9 (63 HP)      Atk: +12r/+12m  
 AC: 20r/18m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 8+      Shock: 2/15  
 Skill: +6      Move: 10m  
 Save: 11+      ML: 10

Modded Armored Clothing

Modded Light Pistol (1d6+4, Tr. 1d8/x2, 15 mag)

Advanced Knife (1d6+4, Shock 2/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Cranial Jack:** Links to jack-equipped gear  
**Enhanced Reflexes III (Nerve):** Twice/scene as an Instant action gain a bonus Main and Move action  
**Neural Buffer:** Adds +27 HP vs. cyberspace damage  
**Reaction Booster II (Nerve):** Automatically win initiative  
**Cyberdeck:** Memory 17, Shielding 20, CPU 7 with verbs  
*Defend, Glitch, Kill, Paralyze, Sense, Sabotage, Silence, Stun, Lock, Terminate* and subjects *Avatar, Barrier, Cyber, Camera, Door, Nerve Cyber, Program*  
**Hacker (Edge):** Can use the Hacker Edge  
**Hard to Kill (Edge):** +2 HP/HD, +1 Trauma Target

**Gang Drone Pilot**

Danger Value: 5

HD: 3 (15 HP+3)      Atk: +5r/+5m  
 AC: 14r/13m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 6+      Shock: 2/15  
 Skill: +2      Move: 10m  
 Save: 14+      ML: 8

Street Leathers

Combat Rifle (1d12+1, Tr. 1d8/x3, 30 mag, burst)

Knife (1d4+1, Shock 2/15, Trauma 1d6/x3)

**Coordination Augment I (Nerve):** +1 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls  
**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.  
**Headcomm (Sensory):** Built-in radio comms  
**Remote Control Unit (Nerve):** Controls drones/vehicles

**Veteran Corporate Drone Jockey**

Danger Value: 12

HD: 4 (20 HP+10)      Atk: +7r/+6m  
 AC: 19r/15m      Dmg: Wpn  
 TT: 8+      Shock: 3/15  
 Skill: +3      Move: 10m  
 Save: 13+      ML: 10

Medium Armored Suit

Combat Rifle (1d12+1, Tr. 1d8/x3, 30 mag, burst)

Advanced Knife (1d6+1, Shock 3/15, Tr. 1d8/x3)

**Coordination Augment I (Nerve):** +1 Dex mod to AC/hit/damage/Shock related rolls  
**Cybereyes (Sensory):** Integral flash protection  
**Enhanced Reflexes I (Nerve):** Once/scene as an On Turn, gain a bonus Main action.  
**Gunlink (Sensory):** Ignore range penalties and up to -2 of cover or concealment. Once/scene, reroll a missed shot.  
**Remote Control Unit (Nerve):** Controls drones/vehicles

## DESIGNING ENEMIES

While the example NPC stat blocks in this section are helpful, every GM will eventually need to put together a nemesis or two of their own. Rank-and-file goons can be assembled in moments, but how does a GM go about building a more experienced foe? To generate this enemy, follow the steps below.

### CHOOSE THEIR HIT DICE

Pick a number of hit dice appropriate to their role and function in the world, as exemplified by the table below. NPCs have 1d8 hit points per hit die, or 5 per hit die if you prefer to average it out. Very tough NPCs might get an extra +1 or +2 HP per die.

| HD | Type of Human NPC                          |
|----|--------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Civilian, thug, ganger, or novice city cop |
| 2  | Veteran ganger or experienced cop          |
| 3  | Petty gang lieutenant or police sergeant   |
| 4  | SWAT leader or capable operator            |
| 5  | Elite squad member, minor gang leader      |
| 6  | A major figure of danger in the district   |
| 7  | High-level elite corp or city agents       |
| 8  | Elite operators, major gang bosses         |
| 9  | Among the most dangerous in the city       |
| 10 | Among the most dangerous in the world      |

Note that just because an NPC is important, it doesn't mean they have to have a lot of hit dice. Hit dice reflect survival in an environment or profession where lethal danger is a normal part of life. A political general back at headquarters may have only one hit die, while a thirty-year non-com at a forward base might be a five hit die survivor. In the same vein, the megacorp CEO who's survived thirteen assassination attempts and can identify homicidally-inclined underlings by smell alone might have more hit dice than his cyborg bodyguard.

### ADD CYBERWARE

Once you've chosen their hit dice, turn to page 194 and pick any appropriate cyberware from the summary list there. Ordinary thugs might be lucky to have any combat cyber at all, while a megacorp assassin is going to be chromed to the marrow. You can use the existing stat blocks as guidelines as to how much cyber to give a given NPC.

Don't worry about System Strain totals, as not many combat NPCs live long enough to worry about accumulating too much System Strain. As for the dollar cost of the cyberware, don't worry about calculating it all out, but keep some proportion in mind. A gang boss may be wealthy, but can he really afford the cost of even a secondhand *Enhanced Reflexes III* system?

### ADD FOCI AND EDGES

Most NPCs don't use Foci and don't have Edges. They're normal men and women, without the special genius that PCs have for their line of work. In some cases, however, an NPC may be talented enough to deserve a few extra perks.

As a general rule, NPCs of 4 HD and fewer aren't important enough to have Edges or Foci. They might have them in special cases, but you're usually best off ignoring them.

NPCs of 5 or more HD might have one appropriate Edge or one level of Focus. At 7 HD or more, they probably have at least one Edge and one level of Focus, if not more. Any 10 HD monsters almost certainly have at least two Edges and two levels of Foci, and three or four are not impossible. Some might have special bespoke abilities that reflect custom cyber or unique personal talents.

### ADD GEAR

Note down the armor and weaponry the NPC is most likely to be using when the PCs run into them. If you anticipate a meeting under peaceful circumstances, they might be wearing only subtle street armor and carrying a concealed pistol, while an expected battlefield engagement will see the heaviest armor they've got and one or more long arms.

Wealthy or connected NPCs may well be using modded armor or weapons, as explained on page 46.

### CALCULATE FINAL STATS

Now that you know the NPC's hit dice, cyberware, abilities, and gear, you can note down their final stats. Most of them will be obvious from the information you've already laid out, but a few scores bear special mention.

An NPC's attack bonus is usually equal to their hit dice plus an appropriate combat skill level. Don't forget to add any bonuses from modded weapons, Foci, or cyberware.

An NPC's Skill bonus is usually equal to the highest skill level a PC of their level could have. Thus, if the NPC has 6 HD, they probably get a +3 bonus to skill checks they should be good at.

The Save target for an NPC is always equal to half their hit dice, rounded down, subtracted from fifteen.

A human NPC's Move rating is almost always 10m, unless some cyberware increases it.

Morale for an NPC begins at 7 for the least motivated but still willing combatants, and goes to 8 for experienced fighters, 9 for hardened veterans, and 10 or more for leaders or elites.

## JUDGING COMBAT DIFFICULTY

A basic principle for sandbox GMs is to make combat encounters as hard as they would logically be in the setting. If the PCs decide to storm a megacorp headquarters they will encounter top-of-the-line combat cyborgs whether or not they have any plausible chance of defeating them. If they decide to knock over a petty local gang they're going to face half-starved street rats with knives and stolen pistols, even if such pathetic opposition has no hope of defeating them. The world does not scale to fit their combat level.

Even so, a GM often needs to have some idea of whether or not a particular combat encounter is likely to be survivable by the PCs. They may need to telegraph the danger of a situation, or give the PCs the kind of practical estimation of a foe's danger that any experienced operator should be able to make. While it's impossible to foretell all the hazards of war, there is a basic calculation the GM can make that will give a rough estimate of an encounter's results.

For each combatant, take their base hit dice and levels and apply the modifiers on the adjacent table. A fourth-level PC with some combat cyber and several combat Foci might calculate out as  $4+2+4=10$  points. A scruffy 1 HD ganger with no real talent for murder might just be worth 1 point. Conversely, a megacorp CEO's pet 10 HD assassin who's more chrome than flesh and who has a half-dozen different combat Edges or Foci might be  $(10+20+10)\times 5=200$ .

Note the enormous difference that *Enhanced Reflexes* cyber has on the total. Cyber systems that grant bonus actions have a huge impact on NPC danger, because they tend to burn their actions quickly and "nova" their damage before the PCs can kill them off.

| Combatant Danger Rating                | Mod       |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|
| Base hit dice/level of the combatant   | +HD/level |
| They have modest combat cyber          | +1/2 HD   |
| They have strong combat cyber          | +HD       |
| They have top-end combat cyber         | +2xHD     |
| They have combat Edges/Foci            | +HD       |
| They have <i>Enhanced Reflexes I</i>   | x2        |
| They have <i>Enhanced Reflexes II</i>  | x3        |
| They have <i>Enhanced Reflexes III</i> | x5        |

Once you've calculated the combatant danger values, total up the enemy side and the PC side and compare the ratio.

**The enemy total is four times the PC total.** The PCs are likely to be wiped out utterly if they can't run.

**The enemy total is twice as large.** The PCs are likely to lose at least one teammate and a total party wipe is very possible.

**The enemy total is equal to the PC total.** The PCs will probably win without any casualties.

**The enemy total is half or less of the PC total.** The enemies have no real chance and will be curbstonped without significant situational advantages.

These estimations assume something close to a "white room" fight, with no real terrain or tactical advantages to either side. These numbers also get more unpredictable at low PC levels, where a single unlucky shot can take out an operator. A GM should use them as a general indication of how a fight will probably play out rather than as an assurance that the PCs will be triumphant or doomed in a given fray.





# NPC CYBER DESCRIPTIONS

This spread provides a convenient list of all the cyber in this book and a brief summary of their effects. GMs can print it off to keep handy during play when they need to remember what some NPC's chrome does.

Cyber powers and stat mods are written for NPCs, and do not normally take into account System Strain or attribute scores. NPCs usually have as much System Strain as they need for a single encounter.

| Ware                               | Type    | Conc.   | Effect                                                  |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Active Sense Processor             | Sensory | Medical | Gain +1 Wis mod for senses                              |
| Aesthetic Augmentation Suite       | Body    | Sight   | Body sculpt for effective +1 mod on all Cha checks      |
| Assisted Glide System              | Body    | Touch   | Glide from high launch points w/30m Move speed          |
| Banshee Module                     | Body    | Medical | 1/day Main Action to 2d6 sonic blast in 10m line        |
| Body Blades I                      | Limb    | Medical | Base 1d8 dmg, Shock 2/15, Trauma 1d8/x3                 |
| Body Blades II                     | Limb    | Sight   | Base 2d6 dmg, Shock 4/15, Trauma 1d10/x3                |
| Coordination Augment I             | Nerve   | Medical | Effective +1 mod to Dex AC/hit/dmg/Shock/skills         |
| Coordination Augment II            | Nerve   | Touch   | Effective +2 mod to Dex AC/etc and +10m Move            |
| Courier Memory                     | Head    | Medical | Carry locked Memory data                                |
| Cranial Jack                       | Head    | Touch   | Link to jack-equipped gear                              |
| Cyberears (pair)                   | Sensory | Touch   | Noise-filtering synthetic ears                          |
| Cybereyes (pair)                   | Sensory | Sight   | Flash-protected synthetic eyes                          |
| Cyberlimb                          | Limb    | Touch   | Prosthetic with storage space                           |
| Cybernetic Infrastructure Baseline | Body    | Medical | Gain Con 12 for cyber purposes                          |
| Deadman Circuit                    | Body    | Sight   | Fry cyber without access codes                          |
| Dermal Armor I                     | Skin    | Medical | AC 16, +1 to Trauma Target                              |
| Dermal Armor II                    | Skin    | Touch   | As I, but AC 18 and Shock resist                        |
| Dermal Armor III                   | Skin    | Sight   | As II, but AC 20 and +2 Trauma Target                   |
| Dermal Armor/Trauma Shielding      | Body    | Medical | Add +1 to Trauma Target, stacks with Dermal Armor       |
| Discretion Insurance Unit          | Head    | Medical | Cranial bomb with remote key                            |
| Ear Mod/Filter                     | Sensory | Medical | Get +2 on hearing skill checks                          |
| Ear Mod/Positional Detection       | Sensory | Medical | Spatially map all sound positions nearby                |
| Ear Mod/Sonar                      | Sensory | Medical | Sense surrounds as if visually                          |
| Ear Mod/Tracer                     | Sensory | Medical | Eavesdrop on specific targets                           |
| Emergency Stabilization Factor     | Body    | Medical | Automatically stabilize when Mortally Wounded           |
| Enhanced Reflexes I                | Nerve   | Medical | 1/scene as an On Turn, bonus Main Action                |
| Enhanced Reflexes II               | Nerve   | Medical | 1/scene as an Instant, bonus Main and Move              |
| Enhanced Reflexes III              | Nerve   | Touch   | 2/scene as an Instant, bonus Main and Move              |
| Eye Mod/Dazzler                    | Head    | Medical | 1/round On Turn dazzle target; Phys save or -4 AC/hit   |
| Eye Mod/Flechette Launcher         | Head    | Medical | Light pistol attack; surprise is auto-damage, x2 on hit |
| Eye Mod/Impostor                   | Sensory | Medical | Mimic retinal patterns                                  |
| Eye Mod/Infrared Vision            | Sensory | Medical | See heat patterns in the area                           |
| Eye Mod/Low Light Vision           | Sensory | Medical | See in low-light conditions                             |
| Eye Mod/Tactical View              | Sensory | Medical | +1 to visual Notice checks, get transmission/images     |
| Eye Mod/Zoom                       | Sensory | Medical | 500m telescopic vision, no long range hit penalty       |
| Fleshmod                           | Body    | Medical | Completely rework your body                             |
| Full Body Conversion               | Body    | Sight   | Become a full body cyborg                               |

| Ware                          | Type    | Conc.   | Effect                                                   |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Funes Complex                 | Head    | Medical | 1/day reroll Int skill check; autofail on natural 2      |
| Gunlink                       | Sensory | Touch   | -2 range/cover penalties, 1/scene reroll gun miss        |
| Headcomm                      | Sensory | Medical | Silent radio or phone comms                              |
| Hemosynthetic Filter System   | Body    | Medical | Immune to normal disease/toxin                           |
| Holdout Cavity                | Body    | Medical | 2 Enc. of hidden body space                              |
| Iron Hand Aegis               | Limb    | Touch   | 1/scene as Instant deflect a ranged attack               |
| Limbgun                       | Limb    | Touch   | Implanted gun in a limb; 2 mags and +1 to hit            |
| Medical Support Readout       | Body    | Medical | Gain +2 to Heal checks on you                            |
| Medusa Implant                | Head    | Obvious | Prehensile hair implants                                 |
| Muscle Fiber Replacement I    | Limb    | Touch   | Effective +1 Str bonus on hit/dmg/Shock/checks           |
| Muscle Fiber Replacement II   | Limb    | Sight   | Effective +2 Str bonus on hit/etc. and feats of strength |
| Neolimb                       | Limb    | Sight   | Add a new additional limb                                |
| Neural Buffer                 | Head    | Medical | Gain 3 HP/level vs Stun or Kill cyberspace damage        |
| Omnihand                      | Limb    | Touch   | Toolkit hand, +1 check 1/day                             |
| Poseidon Implants             | Skin    | Touch   | Aquatic adaptation mods                                  |
| Prosthetic Cyber I            | None    | Sight   | Mitigates a Major Injury                                 |
| Prosthetic Cyber II           | None    | Medical | Mitigates a Major Injury                                 |
| Reaction Booster I            | Nerve   | Medical | +2 to Initiative, 1/scene ignore Snap Attack penalty     |
| Reaction Booster II           | Nerve   | Medical | Automatically win initiative                             |
| Recovery Support Unit         | Body    | Medical | Gain 4 System Strain for heals                           |
| Redundant Systems             | Body    | Medical | Sacrifice to avoid Major Injury                          |
| Regulated Anagathic Substrate | None    | Medical | Prolongs human lifespan                                  |
| Remote Control Unit           | Nerve   | Touch   | Remote control drones/vehicles                           |
| Retribution Shield            | Body    | Touch   | 1/scene On Turn to do 2d6 dmg to chosen melee foes       |
| Sealed Systems Implant        | Skin    | Medical | Trigger a temp space suit for 6 hours                    |
| Sensory Recorder              | Sensory | Medical | Record 3 hours of sense input                            |
| Sharkskin Electrodes          | Skin    | Touch   | Do 2d6 non-lethal dmg/round when grappling               |
| Shock Fists                   | Limb    | Touch   | Do 1d8 bonus elec damage in punch combat                 |
| Skillplug Jack I              | Nerve   | Touch   | Use level-1 intellectual plugs                           |
| Skillplug Jack II             | Nerve   | Touch   | Use level-1 plugs of any kind                            |
| Skillplug Wiring              | Nerve   | Medical | Boost skillplug max to level-3                           |
| Skinmod                       | Skin    | Sight   | Make cosmetic-level body mods                            |
| Skull Citadel                 | Head    | Medical | Survive non-dismembering lethal damage                   |
| Skyborn Shielding             | Skin    | Sight   | As Sealed Systems Implant plus micro-g thrusters         |
| Stick Pads                    | Limb    | Touch   | Climb sheer or vertical surfaces                         |
| Synthears (pair)              | Sensory | Medical | Lifelike artificial ears                                 |
| Syntheyes (pair)              | Sensory | Medical | Lifelike artificial eyes                                 |
| Synthlimb                     | Limb    | Medical | Lifelike artificial limb                                 |
| Therapeutic Control Dampers   | Body    | Medical | Suppress an implant side-effect                          |
| Titan Gun System              | Body    | Sight   | Mount a Heavy weapon                                     |
| Trajectory Optimization Node  | Nerve   | Medical | 1/scene turn a miss into a hit                           |
| Viper Sting                   | Body    | Medical | Hidden drug injector for 1d12 dmg, Trauma 1d10/x3        |
| Zombie Wires                  | Nerve   | Medical | Keep acting at 0 HP for 6 rnds or until +25% max dmg     |

# THE CITY

*Cities Without Number* is built primarily as a genre toolbox for cyberpunk gaming. Most GMs will want to either forge their own near-future dystopia or borrow an existing cyberpunk setting for their games, and the tools in this book are meant to make those options as easy as possible.

Even so, sometimes you just want to roll up some cyborg malcontents and go do a crime. In this chapter, an example default setting is provided to help you get playing as quickly as possible.

## A HISTORY OF FAILURE

The past is a closed book to most of the denizens of the City. Corporate academies emphasize the incompetent leadership and feckless stupidity of the world before the Collapse, and the locals old enough to remember the world before have their own slants on what really happened. Most would say that the Collapse never really stopped, and that the world today is still coasting its way to the bottom.

People will argue about the roots of it all, but according to the corporate academies, the start of the Collapse was marked by the beginning of the Russo-European War in 2028. That interminable conflict became the backdrop for environmental disasters, engineered plagues, and multiple nuclear exchanges that rendered significant parts of the world largely uninhabitable. Global superpowers collapsed, nations splintered into desperate successor-states, and the total population of humanity started a downward spiral that has yet to stabilize.

The only remaining lifeline for most of the world is the Market. It's the network of agreements, truces, bribes, understandings, and military escorts that makes global trade possible, the mesh of ships and overland transports that bring vital goods to the surviving megaplexes. Only strength, cunning, and vast amounts of money can bring a cargo of precious resources through the lines of warring states and the desolation of the nuclear-scourged outlands.

No single nation is powerful enough to protect the Market so its care is in the hands of the megacorps, the massive multinational corporations that have no particular loyalty to anything but their own interests. The seven biggest corps, the Market Leaders, oversee the operation of the Market and ensure that its channels of trade remain open.

It's through the Market that cities still trade and food still comes in from the vast automated farms that still operate in the outlands. Secular governments are little more than caretakers for a vast, hungry populace, puppets of corporate executives who tolerate them as a necessary evil. Everyone knows that the real power lies in the hands of the megacorps, and few imagine that such a fact could ever change.

## THE CITY

There are other cities in the world. There are vast megaplexes in North Africa, near the Sahara agri-centers, and huge sprawls along the Atlantic coastline where the wet bulb heat of the Big Steam has driven most of the populace from the interior. There are other cities in the world, but to the inhabitants of the metropolis called New Chicago, their city is simply *the City*.

New Chicago was founded from the remnants of the old, its predecessor nuked during the Second Toledo War when the Free States of America tried to force a corridor north into the Great Lakes Compact. They failed to take the territory after the Eastern Alliance sent reinforcements from New York, but the Chicago Boneyard still ticks a geiger counter as a memento.

The survivors moved north, past the old Chicago suburbs into the depopulated arcology-complexes of Lake Geneva, Racine, and Milwaukee, and there began the construction of a new metropolis. An influx of new citizens from the Eastern Alliance helped, driven by a fear of a second Boston Deletion, as did a Canadian diaspora forced south by the famine of the Long Winter. Steel from the Iron Range and salvaged Chicago concrete came together to form a new haven amid the chaos of the Collapse, all under the watchful eye of Acheron Corporation and its Big Seven brethren.

West of the City is little but the Minnesota desert and the midwestern badlands beyond. East are the savage wilds of Canadian-occupied Michigan, and it's not too far south of the old Illinois border that the Big Steam and its unbearable heat waves start. If you're not taking a corp-licensed suborbital to another megaplex, there's nowhere else to go out here.

It's been that way for more than thirty years, ever since the City first reared itself on the bones of its burnt-out predecessors. Few expect it will change for the better.

## DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

The default setting provided here was built with the random generation tools in this book, but it is far, far more than you should worry about making for your own first setting. Don't take it as an example of everything you should make before you start playing your own campaign.

Instead, it's better to follow the guidelines in the campaign creation chapter and just build the basic necessities first. Afterwards, if you have more time, or if you are being paid a great deal of money by Kickstarter backers, you can come back and flesh out additional material for your world.



# THE DISUNITED STATES

**The Big Steam:** The largely uninhabited interior of the southeast US. Extended periods of extreme heat and humidity can kill within hours if artificial cooling measures are unavailable.

**Eastern Alliance:** Ruled from New York City, the Eastern Alliance relies on Legau-Durach to enable its role as a hub of trans-Atlantic trade. The outlying regions are neo-feudal holdings of industrial corp subsidiary oligarchs who reside above the canals of NYC.

**Free States of America:** Ultra-dense coastal megaplexes rely on automated Nova Vida plantations in the Big Steam and nuke-powered seawater purification to survive. Acheron cultivates its people's revanchist dreams of American unification in order to keep its border hot and arms sales strong.

**The Glass:** Remnant of the last major nuke launch of the Second American Civil War, this stretch of Idaho and Montana is pocked with trinitite glass craters and invisible zones of lethal radiation. Local smugglers use the zones to slow pursuit.

**Great Basin Wastes:** Aquifer collapse and weather pattern changes have rendered most of the former Great Basin region impractical for human habitation. The quick shift forced the rapid abandonment of its former cities, which remain rich sources of salvage and dangerous nests of rebels.

**Great Lakes Compact:** While Canadian refugees from the Long Winter have occupied Michigan, the Compact still jealously guards its control of the majority of Great Lakes freshwater resources.

**Greater Sonoran Desert:** Much expanded from its former borders, the Greater Sonoran is almost unsurvivably hot at times. Local badlanders fight viciously over the few remaining water sources.

**Midwest Badlands:** Ruined by shifting weather and nuclear fallout, these wastes nurture a few automated plantations and a handful of dying towns.

**Minnesota Desert:** A sudden and drastic reduction in rainfall has left numerous empty lakebeds and skeletal forests standing in this scrub wasteland.

**Northwestern People's Republic:** Largely a satrapy of the California Enclaves, their water and hydropower resources are exploited freely by their southern neighbors. Acheron "respects the national interests involved" and does not intervene save to sell weaponry to Peep guerrillas and Claver peacekeeping forces alike.

**Salem Plateau Cities:** Higher elevation and a gentler local climate spares the Salem Plateau plexes from the heat of the Big Steam. Nova Vida has them as client cities, much to the chagrin of the Free States, and numerous ill-understood social and biological experiments are conducted in the Ozarks.

**The Californian Enclaves:** Once broken by Acheron in the first of the US water conflicts, the city-states of California now form the primary government on the west coast. They can agree on little else but exploiting their northern neighbors, and Acheron's diligent work in ensuring discord helps keep flare-ups of intercine violence a regular event.



# A TIMELINE OF COLLAPSE

The megacorps make a point of restricting historical study in corp-sponsored schools, but some events have had too many survivors to be edited out of public memory. The ones recorded below are just a sample.

- 2028:** Russo-European War begins over control of Poland. Nuclear weapons deployed within the first four months, devastating Ukraine, Poland, Greenland, the Nordic region, and much of western Russia. Western Euro anti-missile space defenses hold out.
- 2029:** Acheron Corporation established as a cut-out for deniably dealing US weapons to Europe.
- 2031:** The Canadian-sponsored Sunshade Project fails catastrophically in its attempt to check global climate change. The atmospheric injection of particulate matter disrupts weather patterns globally, creating wild temperature swings and rendering some areas largely uninhabitable outside of sheltered arcologies. Canada annexed by the US as reparations for the damage.
- 2032:** Sixth Kashmir War begins between India and Pakistan and soon ends in a general nuclear exchange between the two nations. Most believe it was initially intended as a limited political distraction from the ongoing South Asian famines that rapidly got out of hand. Seventy-three percent of the regional population dies within the following twelve months.
- 2032:** US government declares war on Russia; there is widespread mutiny among the armed forces designated for overseas dispatch, abetted by sympathetic state governors. US military forces are effectively paralyzed as a widespread political purge is undertaken by multiple federal factions.
- 2033:** China invades Taiwan. The Taiwanese chip foundries are captured largely intact. The Taiwanese population is not.
- 2033:** The Great Net Collapse. Motivated by fear of Chinese infowar tech demonstrated during the Taiwan invasion, countries around the world nationalize their local nets, breaking connections and seeking data autarky. Major corporations encourage and enable this policy in order to develop their own exclusively-controlled networks.
- 2034:** Lianghe Consumer Goods megacorp created as a government-controlled front company for international sale of Taiwanese chips. Political infighting over which Party faction is to control Lianghe paralyzes the Politburo; the nonaligned corporate caretakers become power brokers among the survivors of the aftermath.
- 2034:** Acheron becomes the first nuclear-armed megacorp through the assistance of affiliated US government officials.
- 2035:** Navis Logistics initiates the roots of the modern Market by acting as a multinational cut-out for nonaligned nations seeking to deniably trade in Taiwanese chips. Navis offices are granted de-facto extraterritoriality in multiple nations in exchange for this brokerage.
- 2035:** Initial outbreak of the Scorpion Plague in Quanzhou; the disease has all the characteristics of an engineered bioweapon targeting the Han ethnic group, but its creator remains unclear. Victims suffer backwards-arching convulsions that lead to eventual suffocation and death. Reports of the disease's mutation and its appearance in sporadic international outbreaks are condemned by corporate media as misinformation.
- 2036:** The Euro orbital dreadnaught *Le Triumphant* is brought down by Russian space forces. The ensuing destruction of the orbital's massive cobalt stacks and their crash in northeastern Nigeria creates a belt of dangerous radioactivity from upper Egypt to the coast of Nigeria. The EU seizes Nigerian oil fields as reparations for the stolen cobalt and seed funds for relief efforts to be run by EU-based corporations and NGOs.
- 2036:** Obelisk Heavy Industries megacorp founded in Cairo by a consortium of international investors to facilitate efforts to adapt to the increased radiation in Africa. Their security staff establish continental trade corridors in order to provide humanitarian aid. Contributions are accepted in raw resources and reconstruction volunteers.
- 2036:** Acheron and Lianghe agree to jointly sponsor the still-ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war as a testbed for their military product development. Surviving forces on both sides are re-allocated to the corps; territorial sovereignty is determined by hitting both military and sales targets.
- 2036:** Aquifer collapse and persistent drought throughout the American West leaves the western states in crisis. Californian state forces act to seize control of remaining water resources. The federal government is hamstrung by tangled lines of military authority; Acheron's 3rd Armored Outcome Achievement Division repels the Californians and declares Market control of water resources in the interest of public security. Las Vegas chosen as corporate headquarters.
- 2038:** The Scorpion Plague has killed more than half of China's population. Experimental medical cyberware is rolled out on a nationwide basis in an attempt to bypass the nerve damage caused by the disease, and almost every adult Chinese citizen is implanted with the neuralware. Political influence hinges entirely on a faction's ability to acquire a larger proportion of Lianghe's output.



- 2039:** Kamigawa Neurotechnics is founded in Tokyo by neo-zaibatsu directors capitalizing on the flight of Chinese cyber researchers whose factions lost out in the Lianghe power struggles. The fiction of corporate submission to national laws is abandoned as Kamigawa strikes a trade deal for embargoed Lianghe chips in order to pursue their projects, citing "global necessity".
- 2040:** Second American Civil War begins between the federal government and several mutually-conflicting state-based alliances. America rapidly devolves into balkanized regional governments after DC is nuked by hijacked federal missiles. Several secessionists groups claim credit.
- 2041:** The Russo-European War ends in mutual exhaustion and declarations of victory. Poland is largely uninhabitable, and the EU trades its surviving government-in-exile to Russia in exchange for the re-opening of the oil trade. In Berlin, a portion of the new oil tariffs is spent to erect a monument to Polish heroism.
- 2041:** The Boston Deletion; on June 7th the entire Greater Boston urban core ceases to exist along with its three million inhabitants, leaving only a shallow crater and the resulting New Harbor. Numerous theories for its disappearance are presented, from the detonation of a superweapon to a random cosmic glitch, but no definitive explanation has been determined to date.
- 2042:** Second Toledo War between the Free States of America and the Great Lakes Compact as the former attempts to seize direct water access. The Compact capital of Chicago is nuked, but the Free States are rebuffed with Eastern Alliance aid.
- 2043:** Founding of the city of New Chicago out of several existing metroplexes north of the radioactive remnants of Old Chicago. The new population largely consists of annexed locals, refugees from Chicago and a contingent of Easterners fleeing coastal flooding and fears of a second Deletion.
- 2043:** Obelisk obtains de facto control over central Africa. Indentured volunteer laborers are equipped with a new line of cybernetic hands to improve productivity; consumers are allowed to extend their indentures to defer payment.
- 2044:** Second American Civil War sputters out into an indefinite pause. Federal and state military forces have collapsed, with only corporate militaries retaining cohesion or supply. Dependence on corporate resources leaves most local governments in a firmly subordinate role.
- 2046:** The Long Winter; due to climate instability provoked by an interaction of the Sunshade Project with repeated nuclear exchanges, the northern hemisphere has no significant summer warming this year. Famine is general the following year as large numbers of refugees seek food in South America or the less-contaminated areas of Africa.
- 2047:** The Market blossoms as transnational megacorps are recognized as independent humanitarian powers. Nations begin to offer formal recognition of megacorp independence in exchange for desperately-needed trade goods and technology. The corporations move to tighten their control over movement; visas and travel permissions now hinge on corporate affiliations.
- 2048:** A Canadian First Nations coalition licenses Canadian independence from Acheron with the assistance of several operator teams from their communities. The new licensees face native unrest and contract Acheron for security services.
- 2048:** Nova Vida Life Science established in Brazil as a joint enterprise between local government officials and expatriate northern corporations. Nova Vida develops methods of repurposing much of the Amazon into automated farms, promising salvation in the face of global famines.
- 2050:** Nova Vida demonstrates that the indigenous Amazonian populations are persistent reservoirs of several lethally-dangerous pathogens, and that public safety requires appropriate prophylactic measures. Isolated groups of survivors still continue a guerrilla war against corp medical teams.
- 2051:** The Scorpion Plague has mutated into a relatively harmless chronic tic. Between it and the Long Winter, nine-tenths of China's population is gone. Automated farms and mass grain production become a priority under a national repopulation program.
- 2052:** Taotie Agriculture megacorp established to develop large-scale automated food production in Asia. Their plans utilize tech from Kamigawa and large numbers of neural-implanted indentures from Obelisk.
- 2053:** Depopulation of most of the interior southeast United States as wet bulb temperatures become dangerously high for extended periods. The population of the Free States of America is largely resettled in ultra-dense coastal conurbations engineered to resist rising sea levels, with isolated outposts of habitation in higher-altitude areas.
- 2054:** Navis Logistics dismembered by the other major megacorps after an unspecified crime that involved multiple elite operator teams. The largest remaining megacorps create the Market Leader council to regulate Market access and ensure that their control remains undisrupted.
- 2054:** Legau-Durach GmbH formed out of Baltic shipping concerns and the remnants of Navis Logistics; they join the Market Leaders as the most junior of the megacorps. No further additions to the Market Leaders are deemed necessary; any corporation large enough to threaten an existing member is to be destroyed or bought out.
- 2055-2074:** [Redacted]
- 2075:** The present day.



# THE MEGACORPS

Seven major megacorps make up the “Market Leaders”, the ruling authorities that control the global Market. While several hundred second-tier megacorps exist as subsidiaries or corporate vassals, these seven are their unquestioned masters, the least of them more than capable of extinguishing a troublesome national government or wiping out a problematic nation-state.

In the City, Acheron Corporation has the most direct influence due to its traditional grip on the post-US successor states. Even so, all of the Big Seven have regional offices in the City, and certain districts are their de facto corporate territory.

In addition to brief descriptions of each corporation’s past and present goals, a few significant megacorp traits are listed for each. GMs can use these qualities as touchstones for determining how a corp might react to particular threats or opportunities.

## ACHERON CORPORATION

Oldest of the Market Leaders, Acheron’s heavily militarized ethos shows in its business organization. Employees serve in either the “military” or “civilian” track, with the former providing mercenary and security services to the highest bidder and the latter producing weaponry and military R&D. In practice, the two branches are almost always at each other’s throats over resource allocations, a situation which the high command cultivates. So long as they’re eating each other, they won’t have time to scheme against their superiors.

Acheron has its strongest influence in North America, being an effective military hegemon over the successor-states of the former USA. They once owned Canada as a directly-run corporate satrapy, but licensed it out to a Canadian First Nations coalition after determining that the loss of direct taxation revenue would be more than compensated by no longer needing to provide infrastructure maintenance over such a large region. They have considerable influence in the former states of Mexico as well, though Nova Vida’s grip is firm south of Panama.

Acheron values profitable violence, and they are constantly cultivating military engagements between client powers and customers. They do not care who gets shot so long as the bullets were bought from them, and those employees who can cause the most fiscally-rewarding mayhem will rise quickest through their ranks. Given the rather “kinetic” nature of Acheron’s business, fragging superiors on the battlefield is a time-honored tradition, with a successfully deniable assassination being a common method of corporate advancement.

**Megacorp Traits:** Brute force, heavy weaponry, playing both sides against the other, direct actions, more-than-usual disregard for human life



## KAMIGAWA NEUROTECHNICS

The most reclusive and mysterious of the Market Leaders, Kamigawa has less interest than most in influencing local governments. So long as they have enough pull to keep government officials from interfering with their facilities or blocking their commercial activities, they seem content to let the other Big Seven fight over the levers of power. Only in Japan does Kamigawa have a firm grip on local authorities, and there their power is wholly unchallenged.

Kamigawa specializes in two things: cyberware and subsidiaries. Several thousand corporations exist that are nothing more than well-veiled Kamigawa subsidiaries, wholly controlled by the board in Tokyo. The corp uses these subsidiaries to vend lines of cyberware ranging from mass-market trash for the desperate to the absolute cutting-edge neural enhancers sold under the Kamigawa name. These subsidiaries often engage in wholly different lines of business, but several have started to earn fame for a surprisingly advanced line of cyberdecks and hacking tools.

Kamigawa values self-contained profit. Even more than most megacorps, all their business transactions are purely business; they have no real allies and no lasting enemies. They’ll fight ruthlessly to take over the cyberware market in a region, but the moment the profit line turns red they’ll drop it without a moment’s hesitation. In corporate affairs, Kamigawa can always be relied upon to stay bought... until someone else makes a better offer.

**Megacorp Traits:** Secretive, isolated, cold obsession with profit, self-contained facilities and employee residences, lethally violent against high-ranking defectors or failures

## LEGAU-DURACH GMBH

Newest of the Big Seven, Legau-Durach was pieced together out of the picked-over remains of Navis Logistics and a half-dozen major corporations that were on the cusp of challenging the current Market Leaders. Its makers were unable to safely assimilate the former Navis' holdings but unwilling to let them fall into outside hands, so they contented themselves with stitching together a new megacorp they could more easily monitor and control. They have extensive holdings in the Baltics underpinned by old EU military logistics contracts, but their inherited Navis offices can be found world-wide.

With six megacorp overseers, however, the control of any single one is greatly diluted. Legau-Durach has become the megacorp equivalent of the wild west, an untamed expanse of subsidiaries, branch offices, and regional headquarters awaiting a firm hand to forge it into a true titan. Former CEOs of once-independent subsidiaries and overseer personnel installed by the corp's creators duel over control of the surviving assets, each forging their own petty kingdom under the Legau-Durach umbrella. Virtually every line of business is represented by one of them, though most have some ties with the worldwide network of shipping and logistical services that Navis one controlled.

Legau-Durach is where a corper goes to get power or a quick destruction. There are minor subsidiaries and branch departments almost totally void of outside direction, just waiting for a word from corporate HQ to accept a new CEO. That same corporate HQ is also too divided to provide much support to that new CEO if they manage to get in over their heads. A certain amount of institutional attrition is expected in these turbulent times, and an executive who can't perform can expect to be regarded as expendable.

**Megacorp Traits:** Unpredictable, highly balkanized, outside backing from the other Big Seven, innovative, recklessly daring

## LIANGHE CONSUMER GOODS

One of the older corps among the Big Seven, Lianghe was originally intended to be a crown jewel of the Chinese economy, overseeing Taiwanese chip fabs in obedience to the Party and their hand-picked overseers. The incredible wealth and power presented by this opportunity led to party infighting, however, and in the end only the supposedly-temporary corporate caretakers were left to pick up the pieces. The ensuing Scorpion Plague only made Lianghe all the more important, with its chips being critical to the development of vital medical cyber.

Lianghe is catholic in its business interests, however, and it produces an enormous range of daily-use products, from snack foods to entertainment media to vehicles to high fashion. Lianghe operates on a strict principle of "non-local leadership", requiring every executive position short of the very highest levels

to be filled by a candidate not from that local region. While this measure makes Lianghe considerably less nepotistic than most of their peers, it also ensures that the local branch leadership has absolutely no ties to the area in which they operate. Such CEOs will often provide support to local groups determined to follow the "Lianghe Way", but have little attachment to others in their customer base.

Lianghe's corporate culture has been profoundly affected by the Scorpion Plague and the decimation of China's population. The upper leadership is absolutely convinced that the Han people and culture are at risk of complete extinction without vigorous efforts to spread both, and the "Lianghe Way" of cultural propagation is the fundamental purpose of the company. Within the company, success in obtaining colonial holdings for Lianghe and the assimilation of outside groups into Lianghe's corporate culture is the surest route for career advancement.

**Megacorp Traits:** Unabashed colonialism, cultural propaganda, backing sympathetic cultural groups, expelling or forcibly assimilating competitor populations

## NOVA VIDA LIFE SCIENCES

A product of the Long Winter and the global famines that followed, Nova Vida is a Brazil-based megacorp dedicated largely to medical and agricultural technology. Born of a corporate marriage between an overwhelmed Brazilian government and a raft of fleeing northern-hemisphere oligarchs, Nova Vida is the most "idealistic" of the megacorps, in the sense of having a particular vision for humanity's future.

Even so, Nova Vida does not have only *one* vision. At least a half-dozen different corporate factions duel over the particular kind of transhuman future that needs to come to pass, though all agree that a carefully-maintained global population maximum is necessary. By "right-sizing" surplus populations, more room is made for Nova Vida-affiliated customers and clients. As a consequence, Nova Vida may be responsible for more deaths globally than Acheron is, most accomplished through relatively bloodless means of starvation or systematic impoverishment. More kinetic solutions are used for smaller populations.

Nova Vida is enamored of utopia. Its projects focus on new communities, new social patterns, new medical treatments, and new modes of production. Executives are rewarded for pushing the transhuman dreams of their faction superiors, many of which involve exotic new social structures that entrench corper elites in a permanent overclass. No megacorp rewards its employees as generously as Nova Vida does, as the prosperity and affluence of their subordinates is tangible proof of the validity of the social theories.

**Megacorp Traits:** Abundant luxury, transhumanism, ideology-based factionalism, altered humanity, system-induced genocides

## OBELISK HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Extractive industries have a long history in Africa, but Obelisk Heavy Industries is a relatively new corporation. Founded in Cairo in the wake of the cobalt poisoning disaster induced by the crash of the *Le Triumphant*, its founders included more than a dozen major resource extraction corporations, including numerous African national state-run concerns. Nigeria provided both resources and extra-territorial rights in hopes of Obelisk's help in countering the recent seizure of their oil fields by the EU as "reparations for the theft of the *Le Triumphant's* cobalt reserves".

Their efforts were repaid handsomely; Obelisk rapidly expelled the EU and took the oil fields for their own ends, marking the first of a series of "national liberations" conducted throughout Africa. Ostensibly acting on behalf of the national corporations that sat on their board, Obelisk systematically secured a majority of the richest, most valuable natural resource sites on the continent. These resources were then traded back to national governments in exchange for "volunteer" indentures and extra-territorial authority, supposedly to work toward the restoration of the poisoned regions and the mutual economic security of the participants.

Obelisk prefers to work through local subsidiaries, often ones that are officially nationalized corporations or public monopolies. They have so many state-owned companies on their corporate board that almost anything they do can be justified as being at the behest of one government or another. This habit extends beyond Africa, and Obelisk regional branches almost always have a very close relationship with the local government. Their use of massive numbers of indentured employees for their extraction work makes them the majority employer in many locations, and their rank and file are both brutally exploited and desperately afraid of losing what little security they have.

**Megacorp Traits:** Public-private partnerships, indentured labor, political scheming, disregard for employee safety, dangerously polluting industries

## TAOTIE AGRICULTURAL

The enormous population crash in China forced a radical reorganization of agricultural tech in order to maximize efficiency, and Taotie was the product of this reform. Kamigawa and Lianghe had no interest in giving Nova Vida further influence in Asia, and co-operated to form an alternative agricultural megacorp to fill the vacuum. As a result, ag-tech competition between Taotie and Nova Vida is some of the hottest in the world, with new strains of soy and automated tractor designs fought over with all the violence that corp-sponsored operators can bring.

Taotie's chief ally is Obelisk, which provides much of the indentured labor used on Taotie's farms where automation isn't cost-effective. Long-standing Sino-African trade ties have been reinforced by this arrangement, and numerous African nations rely on local Taotie-run farms in order to supply their urban megaplexes.

Taotie works to control all aspects of its employees' lives, and food is one of their chief tools in exerting that influence. They're known for forcibly acquiring competing agricultural businesses and crushing small farmers, all the better to ensure that they alone can feed the masses. With hunger being one of the defining fears of the modern age, Taotie is confident that control will come naturally once they entirely own the means of eating.

**Megacorp Traits:** Suffocating intrusiveness, man-made famines, extortion through food supplies, bounty and abundance for obedient employees



## OTHER GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

While the megacorps may be the most important organizations in the City, they're by no means the only players. The groups noted below are just a small selection of possible employers or antagonists for capable operators.

**Atlantean Rights Organization:** Its members believe that the massive island of Atlantis actually exists east of Cuba, but is being concealed by the megacorps and government. Some members claim descent from Atlantean refugees, while others are sympathizers who demand acknowledgment of Atlantis' existence and an end to Atlantean erasure. The nobility in exile are currently led by the Present Crown Zenobia Anderson, also known as the popular cam idol "Zenny A".

**Badgers:** Not all the citizens of Wisconsin supported secession and the Great Lakes Compact, though resistance was thoroughly crushed before the Second Toledo War. The guerrilla remnants devolved into loosely-affiliated gangs and extortionist groups, operating under a fiction of loyalty to a nonexistent federal government.

**Firsters:** A secret organization dedicated to restoring the authority of national governments around the globe. They commonly get extensive under-the-table support from City bureaucrats, but these same bureaucrats are known for burning them when scapegoats are needed for the corps. Some cells retain knowledge of hidden military stockpiles and secret government projects.

**Gobbers:** More politely, the "good old boys", former residents of the Free States of America who fled north during the second civil war, rejecting the FSA. The Second Toledo War stoked enormous resentment against them, particularly after the nuking of Old Chicago, and most gobbler families now are either very heavily armed or very discreet about their origins. The Free States regularly recruit agents from among them, playing on their bitterness toward their unwilling hosts.

**Indenture Rights League:** Activists dedicated to spreading legal, enforcement agency-backed indenture contracts among the underclass, particularly among prostitutes and unskilled labor. They're opposed by human traffickers, who find informal slavery to be cheaper and easier to implement than legalized indenture.

**Leafs:** A name for the Canadian population of the City, many of which were forced west and south during the famines of the Long Winter. There is considerable popular Compact resentment over the Canadian government-in-exile's occupation of northern Michigan, and attacks on Canadian businesses and neighborhoods are not unknown.

**Leggers:** Short for "organleggers", there are scores, if not hundreds of active snatcher gangs operating in the City. Vicious fights often flare over control of valuable "harvest stocks" in arcologies, slums, and other contained residential areas. All of them require some kind of corp connections in order to scrub their salvaged cyberware of corp DRM and get their jacked organs into the clinic supply lines, and they are sometimes used as proxy shock troops by their patrons.

**Neos:** A multi-factional ideological movement aimed toward rejecting the conventional definition of humanity in favor of a new, transhuman existence. Wealthy Neo leaders fund mod work for their most capable followers, making the movement something of a cross between a cult, a militia, and a pyramid scheme.

**New World Movement:** A corp-sponsored revolutionary organization designed to siphon off the most volatile and competent malcontents and direct them at rival corps in controllable ways. Most intelligent members know they're corp-backed, but the opportunity to do real damage to corp facilities and activities without suffering the usual heat is too attractive a prospect for them to resist. Excessively successful cells are either directly employed or eliminated.

**Peeps:** A common nickname for citizens of the Northwest People's Republic, a considerable Peep diaspora exists in the City, driven east by their resistance to Californian control. Organizations such as the Oregon Defense Front, the Salish Resistance, and the Portland Underground conduct extensive recruiting and fund-raising among the community, some of which is not entirely voluntary.

**Sandies:** Casual term for the few inhabitants of the Minnesota Desert. Their smuggling connections are one of the few ways to get cargo around the heavily-monitored Free State-Compact border, and it's a common assumption that any sandy in town for more than a week is there to close a smuggling deal. Their nomadic habits are necessary to avoid corp patrols and government military reprisals.

**Vats:** The Vaticanists, a worldwide underground organization of zealous Catholics determined to preserve the true faith against corporate mores and corrupt modernism. Their secret parishes range from mutual aid societies to terrorist cells, their behavior varying based on which of the several "true popes" they choose to recognize.

# THE ETHOS OF THE CITY

Traditional ethical frameworks rely on an ancient foundation of ideals both religious and secular. Countless generations of saints and sages of every description have taught their peoples the principles they ought to live by, the values and truths that would make for a good life and secure society. The substance of this inheritance varies from place to place, but every modern ethical system has to acknowledge its existence.

This is not the case in the City. The City does not care about these things. The City generally does not *know* about these things. Religions are lifestyle products, ethics are roadmaps to corporate success, and morals exist only to optimize personal advantage. Only among the most grimly dedicated reactionaries and wild-eyed dreamers is there any idea of a world where there is something more important than personal appetites and individual ambitions.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEAL

Among corpors, the ultimate ideal of human existence is “self-actualization”. To a corper, this is the ability to be exactly what you desire to be and to have the life you think is best for yourself. Virtue consists of doing whatever it takes to obtain that end, regardless of the cost to others.

Even so, this scope is limited by the virtue of “sincerity”. A sincere corper is one who is committed to their self-actualization, a quality proven by their willingness to respect the contracts and agreements they make. Those who break their deals are insincere, and are clearly unable to identify or commit to their own ideals. They were willing to sign the contract, but not willing to accept the cost.

All other moral or ethical qualities are nothing more than personal tastes. There is nothing intrinsically valuable about compassion, courage, honesty, mercy, justice, or any other traditional moral concept except that they provide some sort of satisfaction for the person exercising them.

To the extent that they hinder or limit a person’s pursuit of their own desires, they are useless at best and an active sign of mental illness at worst. It’s simply expected that every modern corporate citizen should only be interested in their own self-advancement.

Among the impoverished underclass, stronger traces of the old mores remain. Some are embedded in ethnic culture or inherited religion, while others are consciously adopted by rebels and outcasts. This rejection of pure self-interest is yet another reason why corpors so dislike dealing with the rabble; they are not predictable or reasonable.

Even so, this all-consuming obsession with the self has left its mark on every social level. Even those who are reluctant to accept the principle openly find many reasons to pursue their own best interests.



## THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

The megacorp wants atomized consumers that can be divided up based on market segmentation and hyper-specific product targeting. Because of this, the corps actively cultivate a radical individualism among consumers. Every person is a self-contained island, the only arbiter of their personal interest or social ties. Incidental ties of birth, blood, or inherited religion are meaningless save that they provide some concrete benefit that the individual recognizes. The only identity that is valid is the one you choose to be.

Of course, the masses of the City would generally prefer to be someone richer, more famous, more influential, and happier than they are, and the megacorp is there to provide for those desires.

This individualism is resisted most often among the underclass, who have no real hope of taking advantage of all the products and services the corps sell while still having a real need for mutual support and protection in the face of a hostile world. Even so, the gangs, groups, and mutual aid societies they cultivate are colored by the overculture’s obsession with self-determination. A group under pressure can quickly disintegrate into a swarm of fleeing individuals, each seeking their own best chance.

However, because each group identity is theoretically voluntary and self-chosen, those groups can demand much from the individual. A consumer can sign away their very life if they so choose without any legal qualms or protections, and a group that has a contractual claim on a member’s vital organs can collect without worrying about law enforcement interference. Resisting their demands is not merely illegal, it is immoral. Private enforcement agencies exist in order to ensure that all duly-registered contracts are maintained, with enforcement actions undertaken according to the amount paid by the registrants.

## SEEDS OF REBELLION

The megacorps that control the City need the underclass as a pool of expendable labor and a vast sink of consumers. Despite certain exciting proposals from Nova Vida, the existing socio-economic system does not yet allow for their elimination.

Even so, their very necessity makes them dangerous, and the corps are aware of this danger. The corps do not fear excessive poverty among the underclass; indeed, the poorer they are, the more distracted they are with finding basic sustenance. A perpetually distracted underclass constantly in search of the resources to obtain the next new corporate product is the ideal for many market thinkers.

Instead, the corps fear the idea that things could ever change. So long as the underclass can imagine

no other life than the one they have, they cannot permanently disrupt corp control. So long as they do not hope for better, or worse, *expect* better, they can present no real danger.

As such, the most dangerous threats in corp eyes are those actors who work to persuade the population that a different world is possible. It doesn't matter what specific future is being promised, the very idea that change could happen must be snuffed out instantly. Any number of murderers, thieves, or tyrants are of no threat to the corps, but demagogues are mortal perils.

Naturally, the corps find it better to discredit these idealists than kill them out of hand, but sometimes direct action is necessary. Operators make ideal agents for these actions, as their violence can be easily disavowed as a mere quarrel among zealots.

## A MEGACORP GLOSSARY

The glossary excerpts below are drawn from the *Acheron Academy Student Handbook*, sixth edition.

**Charity:** A net injury to society in which the resources for self-actualization are transferred from the capable and worthy to the incapable and undeserving. Those lacking resources should instead be encouraged to find ways in which they can contribute to the Market and earn their opportunity to consume.

**Citizenship:** A voluntary contract entered into by a person and a governing entity.

**Consumer:** The fundamental unit of civilization and moral value. A consumer's need for self-actualization gives meaning and purpose to the lives of everyone who works to fulfill those needs. To consume is the basic imperative of human existence. Those who refuse to participate in consumption, whether through poverty, a rejection of the ideal, or isolation from the Market, are enemies of human self-actualization.

**Criminal:** A violator of contracts, whether the laws accepted upon registering for citizenship, agreements made with an employer, or private bargains registered with an enforcement agency.

**Enforcement Agency:** A private business that registers contracts between private citizens and carries out the agreed-upon penalties for failure to perform, provided suitable payment is made.

**Evil:** To act so as to deny the opportunity for further self-actualization, either in yourself or another. The less personal advantage you get out of this interference, the more malicious and morally reprehensible it is.

**Freedom:** The absence of any identity, obligation, or relationship that you have not voluntarily accepted.

**Human Rights:** The right to enter into contracts that will be respected. The right to purchase the products of your choice with your earned resources. The right to define your identity in any terms you choose.

**Indenture:** A consumer who has sold the sum total of their labor for a certain period to a contract holder. Corporate employees cannot be indentured to private citizens, as their employer has priority on consuming their labor output.

**Market:** The carefully-managed web of inter-regional contracts, agreements, and mutual understandings that makes production and transportation possible in the modern world.

**Religion:** A set of methods for fulfilling the needs of belonging and spiritual significance in the ways most satisfying to a consumer.

**Self-Actualization:** The ideal human state in which all desires are fulfilled and no personal deprivation is suffered. The state in which you are what you wish to be.

**Society:** A social group that has voluntarily elected to participate in the Market as a cohesive whole, the better to attain their individual self-actualization.

**The Past:** An irrelevant and unimportant prelude to present objectives of consumption and self-actualization. There is nothing to learn from the past because its inhabitants were both foolish and evil, imposing tyrannical conceptions of identity on people and enforcing involuntary societal expectations on unwilling participants. Only in the present can a person freely pursue their own ideal existence through the opportunities inherent in the Market.

**Truth:** The interpretation of reality that best nurtures the self-actualization of an individual, organization, or society.



# THE CITY GOVERNMENT

New Chicago is a democracy, and city-wide elections are held every four years through the mechanisms of “objective democracy”. City modelers factor economic data, infrastructure condition, crime statistics, and official polls together to create an objectively correct model of citizen opinions guaranteed to fully enfranchise all members of society, whether or not they even realize they’re being represented.

Several traditional polling places are kept open on election day as a necessary element of the model, but any attempts to actually *vote* there are taken as election tampering. Such attempts to disenfranchise others by corrupting the objective model are punished harshly.

The megacorps generally ignore city elections and seldom have any interest in particular candidates. Their methods of control are equally applicable to any potential mayor, and letting the city government concern itself with such internal power struggles helps keep them occupied and out of trouble.

The current mayor of New Chicago is Elaine Korsakoff, recently elected for her third four-year term. She ran on a platform of social opportunity, celebrating the endless possibilities for each individual in New Chicago and all the wonderful work her administration had done to further expand those opportunities for the city’s least-served citizens. The model judged her campaign to be a resounding success, with objective factors greatly outweighing the minor element of poll results.

Each district uses the same mechanism to elect a district administrator responsible for overseeing the activities of individual bureaucratic departments. Due to the opportunities for graft and nepotism, each

district has its own branch of each governmental department. There are departments of Law Enforcement, City Services, Administration, Finance, Buildings, Taxation, Corporate Liaison, and Records for each of the districts, each semi-independent from the head department in Rachowski and led by appointees selected by the current district administrator. Aside from these major departments, there are dozens of smaller sections devoted to particular local needs or useful slush funds.

City bureaucrats are notoriously corrupt, and it’s commonly accepted that the only way to get anything done is to either pay bribes or get corporate backing for your request. These “priority service fees” fund the lavish lifestyles of senior government staffers.

The table below offers usual prices for particular services. Minor services can be had by almost any street-wise customer, but serious crimes need a Contact or a favor in return before a price can be set. Even the most corrupt functionary will avoid targeting corporates or major figures in the city; the certainty of being organlegged isn’t worth the bribe money.

| Common Services                 | Priority Fee |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Obtain true city identification | \$100        |
| Obtain poor-grade fake ID       | \$500        |
| Obtain very good fake ID        | \$5,000      |
| Have a false ID entered as real | \$20,000     |
| Have cops arrest someone        | \$5,000      |
| Have cops assassinate someone   | \$25,000     |
| Get city records on someone     | \$5,000      |



# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

There are two types of law in the City: public law enforced by the city police, and private law given teeth by the private enforcement agencies. Both are technically lawful, but city law has theoretical priority over private contracts.

City cops are supposed to enforce all the typical, predictable laws against violence, theft, vandalism, public disorder, seditious agitation, and other malfeasances. In practice, petty crime is usually ignored and serious crimes of violence or disorder are answered only when they seem to threaten the city government's basic control of an area. The cops are muscle for the city government and their actions and interests are directed accordingly. Ordinary day-to-day public order is maintained by gangs instead.

A city cop has the right to kill or arrest any non-corporate for any reason they care to give. Corpers must be held alive for pickup by corporate security, though the degree of deference they get varies with their importance to the corps. No one's going to complain about a janitor getting slapped around for starting a fight, but a district executive can shoot a flunky in front of a city cop without the latter noticing a thing.

This license to kill is tempered by public feeling and the keen awareness that virtually everyone they meet is almost as well-armed as they are. City cops will not generally start trouble, but it's understood that lethal force used against them is a good way to get shot.

Apprehended suspects are processed rapidly in pro-forma trials that seldom last longer than five minutes. Fines or imprisonment for a period of hard labor are typical punishments, though career criminals can have these penalties amplified substantially.

| Common Crimes                     | Penalty     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Premeditated murder               | 5-10 years  |
| Manslaughter                      | 1-2 years   |
| Severe bodily harm                | 6 months    |
| Common assault and battery        | 1 month     |
| Sexual assault                    | 6 months    |
| Theft of more than \$1M           | Death       |
| Theft of more than \$100K         | 5-10 years  |
| Theft of more than \$10K          | 1-2 years   |
| Petty theft                       | 6 months    |
| Victim is megacorp elite          | x4 to Death |
| Victim is lesser corper or gov    | x2          |
| Victim is common citizen          | x1          |
| Victim is criminal or street scum | No penalty  |

Fines usually amount to \$1K per 2 months of sentence, and substitute for time for minor crimes.

**Enforcement agencies** are private legal enforcers that are found in the dozens in every district. The smallest are little more than storefront operations that record contracts and hold escrows, offering no physical enforcement but providing cheap rates. The biggest, like Auctoritas or Lawton Resources, have several hundred professional assassins on their payrolls and whole units of mechanized enforcers.

Enforcement agencies are the legally-recognized arbiters of contracts entered with them. The parties involved register the contract, agree on the penalties for noncompliance, and pay a certain sum for the agency's monitoring services.

Afterwards, the agency arbitrates disagreements and makes regular checks on the arrangement to ensure that the terms are being honored. The more they're paid, the more effort they put into oversight.

If the contract is violated, the enforcement agency applies the pre-arranged penalties, whether that consists of a fine levied on the culprit, a savage beating, or disassembly into salable organs. The amount of force and effort the agency puts into this retribution depends on the amount they were paid, but these enforcement actions are entirely lawful and legal and the city cops will not interfere with them.

Unsurprisingly, the more powerful the culprit, the more expensive it is to enact justice on them. Enforcement agencies will record contracts with megacorps, but they will under no circumstances undertake to enforce them. In the underworld, few criminals make any use of enforcement agencies. It's generally cheaper and simpler to hire your muscle directly, even if the quality of the work is not always so professional.

| Enforcement Agency Services                                                                                                                              | Cost        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Merely record a contract                                                                                                                                 | \$100       |
| Basic checking on simple terms                                                                                                                           | \$200/month |
| Careful oversight of a deal                                                                                                                              | \$1K/month  |
| Live-in monitoring of a deal                                                                                                                             | \$5K/month  |
| Apply a fine to escrowed funds                                                                                                                           | 1% of fine  |
| Force a violator to find the money                                                                                                                       | 50% of fine |
| Retrieval from custody or indenture                                                                                                                      | \$10,000    |
| Administer a punitive beating                                                                                                                            | \$2,500     |
| Commit punitive arson                                                                                                                                    | \$5,000     |
| Mutilate a culprit non-lethally                                                                                                                          | \$10,000    |
| Kill a contract violator                                                                                                                                 | \$10,000    |
| Target is important or dangerous                                                                                                                         | x2 to x10   |
| Enforcement costs are paid up front, including fees for fine collection. If the agency decides they cannot carry out the reprisal, it refunds the money. |             |

# SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CITY

Wherever people congregate, there will be social conventions. Relationships and social ties in the City are not wholly alien to modern-day sensibilities, but they have their own set of concerns to address.

## MARRIAGE

Marriage exists in two main modes in the City: the elite power alliances of major corporate families, and the desperate pairings of the semi-criminal underclass. While the trappings of the two are drastically different, the practical functions are similar.

At the high end, marriage is a formal conjoining of assets and influence, a calculated move between two major players who feel that positive synergy exists between their holdings. Romance also exists, of course; how could the prospect of power and influence *not* be romantic? Divorce at this level is known, but uncommon, as the mutual blackmail the spouses soon accumulate on each other is difficult to safely disentangle. Polite infidelity is the norm for more physical needs.

Ambitious corpors at a lower level often ape this style of marriage, though often without nearly as much to offer in personal resources. More often, temporary “partnerships” are forged for career convenience, some of which have sparks of real affection to them.

Among the stubbornly traditional underclass, marriage is an alliance of survival. Two pairs of hands have a better chance of making it on the streets than one, and even the most hard-bitten veteran of the slums can yearn for someone to truly trust and rely on.

## CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD

Rates of childbirth have crashed in recent decades, with few corporate couples reproducing and much of the underclass unable to afford an extra mouth. At most, one or two boutique children might be added by an established corporate couple, often carried by hired surrogates. To have more than this is considered imprudent at best and hopelessly vulgar at worst.

The underclass is more motivated to have children, with no prospect of corp-sponsored “retirement estates” to sustain them after they’re too feeble to work. Even so, many of their offspring are lost to violence, sickness, malnutrition, or the other hundred perils that face the poor in the City.

Poor children are raised by their families. Only a small percentage are lucky enough to get an education through interested family members, corp recruiting programs, or gang-sponsored training. Corporate kids are most often raised in creches so as not to burden their parents, with family time scheduled when it’s convenient. For a child to live with own parents is a luxury belonging only to those ultra-elite who don’t dare expose their offspring to the public and the impoverished who have no other place to send them.

## GANG AFFILIATIONS

The City’s government concerns itself only with maintaining minimal public order and basic infrastructure, while corporate security has no interest in protecting anyone but their own employees and facilities. As a consequence, gangs are the *de facto* rulers of most districts, as they’re the only ones interested in maintaining order in their neighborhoods.

Almost every street-level denizen of the City pays protection money to at least one gang, a sum that varies depending on their ability to pay. Some gangs are “good” in the sense that they actually provide the protection and crime deterrence they promise, while others are merely the biggest bullies in the neighborhood, offering nothing but demands to their “clients”.

Gangs provide a path to success for those ambitious young men and women who have no hope for getting a corporate entry-level position. The work is often bloody, ruthless, and cruel, but it’s a chance to taste luxuries and get respect in a way they never could have as a mere street vendor or day laborer.

## ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Among most corpors, the idea of embracing an ethnic or birth-religious identity is repulsive. To the elite, the only identities worth accepting are those you have consciously chosen; to throw in your lot with other people based on nothing more than a chance of birth is to reject your own individual possibilities.

To the less fortunate denizens of the City, it’s instead a chance to gain strength in numbers they could never obtain alone. Benevolent societies, brotherhoods, tongs, associations, holy guilds, protection leagues, clans, and pride movements can be found for virtually every ethnic group and religion in the City. They’re strongest in the slums and lower districts, where some morph into effective gangs that control their local areas.

While these ethnic and religious groups can be ferociously zealous in advancing their own interests against outsiders, even the most xenophobic have been unable to entirely ignore modern sensibilities about self-made identities. The ease of race-bending flesh-mods and the difficulty of tracing individual pasts has made it relatively simple for people to join whatever ethnic group they find most profitable. Out of an interest in growing their numbers, most associations don’t ask too many questions about new recruits, and in some it’s an open secret that almost no one in it was actually born to the ethnic group or religion it seeks to promote. Many of these new members have the zeal of a new convert and are determined to prove their value to the association by taking its principles and interests to their most extreme ends.



## GENDER AND IDENTITY

While the impoverished, cautious, and bio-reactionary remain wedded to traditional biological sex, successful modern consumers have access to a wealth of cutting-edge gender identities developed by numerous media and medical corporations. Nova Vida's "Passion Play" gender drop is one of the most important annual style events in the City, and private biomod clinics will pay handsomely for preview leaks.

Corporate genders are created by a mix of marketers and medical techs, with stereotypical gender traits and body formats implemented through drugs, implants, and fleshmods. Nova Vida prides itself on its ability to provoke even very complex emotional habits through the right mix of chems and neurostims, with the side effects well within acceptable parameters. Even sexual attraction can be modulated by the right chem mix, with no legally actionable consequences.

These gender identities are then marketed to different consumer segments based on perceived needs, with corp-friendly genders pitched to ambitious climbers and "rebel" identities fed to subcultures through sponsored influencers. Some iconoclasts insist on assembling their own gender identities from preferred behavioral patterns and body mods, but these individuals are often dismissed as freaks and malcontents unwilling or unable to finance a "real" gender.

### d20 Stereotypical Gender Traits

|    |                                         |
|----|-----------------------------------------|
| 1  | Aggression and conflict-willingness     |
| 2  | Ambition and selfishness                |
| 3  | Creativity and the urge to make         |
| 4  | Deceitfulness and natural deceptiveness |
| 5  | Diplomacy and consensus-building        |
| 6  | Discretion and veiled emotion           |
| 7  | Dominance and desire for control        |
| 8  | Flamboyance and expressiveness          |
| 9  | Gregariousness and group orientation    |
| 10 | Introversion and solitary instincts     |
| 11 | Manipulative and controlling behavior   |
| 12 | Neuroticism and intense introspection   |
| 13 | Nurturance and emotional supportiveness |
| 14 | Physicality and contempt for intellect  |
| 15 | Risk-taking and daring                  |
| 16 | Self-discipline and goal focus          |
| 17 | Sexual aggression or lasciviousness     |
| 18 | Spontaneity and unpredictability        |
| 19 | Stoicism and endurance of suffering     |
| 20 | Submissiveness and docility             |

Others find their mods deactivated and drug regimens terminated when their gender subscriptions end. Several thousand "Platinum" and "Sunset Rose" gender subscribers recently found themselves in critical medical distress when Prakheth Identity Studios was bankrupted by rogue operators. In a spirit of public service, Nova Vida is generously providing a discounted, time-limited upgrade opportunity for these consumers into their similar but fuller-featured "Cordova" and "Spartan" gender products.

### d12 Characteristic Gender Indicia

|    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Branded clothing                   |
| 2  | Chest configuration or dimensions  |
| 3  | Decorative cyber implant           |
| 4  | Dermal ridges or patterns          |
| 5  | Universally-shared facial template |
| 6  | Hair length or growth locations    |
| 7  | Hip or limb proportions            |
| 8  | Signature voice or scent mods      |
| 9  | Skin or hair colors or patterns    |
| 10 | Tails or neo-limbs                 |

### d6 Main Marketing Pitch

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Be more respected with this identity.</b> Your rivals will be intimidated and your lovers excited by your fearless commitment to your ideals.                                             |
| 2 | <b>Be more salable with this identity.</b> Employers in your field want these stereotypical qualities, and this identity shows them your full commitment to them.                            |
| 3 | <b>Be part of this identity.</b> Fashionable, eclectic, creative, and unmistakably individual, this identity shows that you're part of the cultural elite.                                   |
| 4 | <b>Fix yourself with this identity.</b> Shed the qualities you hate about yourself and escape into a new and better life, one fully validated and supported by a market-leading corporation. |
| 5 | <b>Have more fun with this identity.</b> Abandon your old limits and experience a new realm of excitement and possibilities, free of outmoded expectations.                                  |
| 6 | <b>Reject mundanity with this identity.</b> For the cutting-edge consumers who refuse to be satisfied by the norm, show your unquenchable passion for self-creation.                         |

# THE DISTRICTS OF THE CITY

The City is vast, and almost any culture, organization, or society can be found somewhere amid its tangled streets. This section provides a brief overview of six of the more important districts in the city core. The others are left for the use of the GM, to be customized with the tools in this book for whatever purposes their own campaigns might require.

## CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

From Lake Michigan to its furthest western suburbs, the City accounts for almost five thousand square kilometers of hab blocks, low-rises, shantytowns, arcologies, urban farms, and industrial zones. The map presented here shows only its core districts, with several important satellite areas further west and south.

Taken as a whole, the latest census counts indicate that more than thirty million people call the City home. The vast majority are the children of transplants driven in by the Collapse, with much of the Midwest rendered uninhabitable by drought and Old Chicago gutted by nuclear fire. A small minority are remnants of the pre-Collapse communities of Milwaukee, Racine, and other small cities long since vanished under the concrete of New Chicago, even their outlines effaced by massive earthworks and new rivers.

New Chicago is a young city, in large part because only the wealthy can afford to grow old. The average age is 26, with a roughly even split between men and women. Only corporers and other affluent locals expect to make it much past fifty.

The ethnic origins of City-dwellers span the globe, with groups of Americans from every corner of the country having fled to the City at one point or another, and a significant number of international refugees having sought shelter from the Collapse as well. The more corp-tied the local, the less these ethnic origins matter; an Acheron corper is Acheron and a Nova Vida exec is Nova Vida, and it would be shockingly vulgar to suggest that they should feel any affinity based on mere parentage.

Among the underclass, these things matter more. Ethnic neighborhoods and foreign enclaves still persist in the shabbier quarters of the city, and the same district can swing from a corp-designed homogeneous consumer culture to a virulent ethnic isolationism within the space of two city blocks. It often takes a local to even be aware of the boundaries in a district, let alone navigate them safely.

## PREPPING THE DISTRICTS FOR USE

The six sample districts provided here are meant to provide a quickly-usable backdrop for your campaign, but you'll need to do a bit of prep beforehand when commencing your life of cyberpunk crime. The steps below are adapted from the district creation guide on page 121.

**Pick a starting district.** Your PCs may not all be from that district, but they're all living in it at the start of the game. The major actors and conflicts in your chosen district can inform the following creation steps, providing ready-made antagonists or grist for the adventure generators.

**Generate three significant local corps.** These might be megacorp branches, or they might be subsidiaries or independents rolled up with the tools on page 126.

**Generate three gangs** with the tools on page 128. These are the gangs the PCs are most likely to deal with, though there are doubtless more in the district.

**Generate three fixers** with the NPC creation tables on page 168. These are the people who will be offering jobs to the PCs.

**Create five schemes** currently going on in the district with the scheme tools on page 133. Don't bother fleshing them out, just roll up the basic outline. You'll use these schemes to help populate your selection of starting missions.

**Create a starting mission** with the guide on page 142. This is the job you're going to dump the PCs into as part of the first session of play. It's meant to acquaint them with the district and the game rules, so it shouldn't be a large affair, and should eat up only one play session of time.

**Use the district schemes to help create four mission hooks** with the tools on page 142. When the PCs complete their introductory mission, you'll have the fixers you generated or some other relevant NPC offer these hooks to them. The PCs either need to pick one of these jobs or make up their own goal; don't let them end the session until you have something to work with.

With this background work done, you'll be in a much more comfortable position going forward. When the PCs finish the intro mission, they can either pick one of the four hooks you created or fabricate their own job. You then flesh out whatever option they picked into a playable mission, generate a new hook, resolve one of the old hooks, and repeat. You only ever need to stay one mission ahead of the PCs, and having a good stock of schemes going on in your district will help you generate those missions in a plausible, coherent way.





THE FLATS

THE NEW RIVER

NORTHSIDE

RHINELAND

GANNETT

THE NEW RIVER

FOGTOWN

PORTSIDE

RACHOWSKI

MOQUAH

LA FOLLETTE

THE CITADEL

LAKE MICHIGAN

HOVAC

GENEVA

LAMBERT

THREE POINTS

0 KM 3 6 9 12 15



## THE CITADEL

Surrounded by the Radetsky Canal, known more popularly as “the moat”, the man-made island of the Citadel district is the heart of corporate power in the City. With only two carefully-guarded land routes into the district and a tightly secure seaport for certified lakers, the lords of the Citadel ensure that only their trusted servitors and favorite playthings have an easy route onto the island.

The weak point to this security lies in the mass of skilled labor necessary to keep the island and its luxuries functioning. Vast numbers of techs, servants, and entertainers flow into the Citadel each day, along with a selection of elite booked for flight from the Tunwell Suborbital airport on the south side of the island. A number of city government offices and criminal rings can get an uninvited guest through island security for a suitable consideration, but the infiltrator is on their own afterwards to dodge the security checkpoints.

Residential districts on the island are exclusively for the use of upper-ranking corpers and government officials, along with a certain number of their most favored servants. The arcologies and residence towers they inhabit are palatial, with luxuriant greenery, exquisite architecture, and a hidden army of laborers waiting to humor every whim of the inhabitants. When their shifts end these laborers are expected to pour back out through the two mass-transit tunnels beneath the island’s bridges. The wages of the least of them are enough to afford a comfortable life in the City, but they are not wanted around their betters when they are not in use.

For the corper residents, most travel into the city via private or shared rotorwing, with flight paths randomized so as to minimize assassination opportunities. The air defenses around the Citadel are superb, and these small VTOL aircraft generally fly with impunity.

### Mission Seeds on the Citadel

An unwilling employee needs to get off the island without being caught by their owner.

A secret infiltration route has been found, but the map to it is held by someone who doesn’t realize it.

A critical piece of blackmail is held by a corp scion who must be squeezed, but can’t be harmed.

Something enormously precious has been casually discarded and the help is rushing to grab it first.

A service company needs to be sabotaged there so a competitor can move in on its lucrative contract.

A corp scion wants to go slumming on the mainland but needs to elude his mother’s security crew.

A corper is almost up on the residency waitlist but the one ahead of him needs to be dealt with.

Given the corporate grip on the island, the city government has absolutely no control over what goes on in the Citadel, even to the point of refraining from sending LEO backup to incidents reported there. City cops don’t cross the bridges, no matter what’s going on on the island. The corps want no interference in their back yard, even to help.

The corps rarely need the assistance, however. Each of the Big Seven maintain residential arcologies or neighborhoods on the Citadel, and each of these zones are armed to the teeth with fast-response teams and military-grade hardware. Several missile attacks have been attempted against the Citadel to no useful effect, and an amphibious assault by Canadian lake pirates in 2062 was repelled with extreme prejudice. The sort of street violence that is a commonplace in the rest of the city is unknown in the Citadel, not least because of the Acheron patrols visible every three blocks.

Which is not to say that crime does not exist in the Citadel. Whether exquisitely talented grifters from the mainland, bored scions of corporate royalty, or semi-suicidal gangs in search of real money, a quiet undercurrent of theft, blackmail, and confidence games can be found throughout the district. Where mainland gangs would resort to guns and cyberclaws, the organizations in the Citadel would much sooner squeeze a mark with incriminating documents and troublesome bank records.

Corporate kids make up a large percentage of this genteel underworld. Bored and untouchable so long as they confine their attentions to the help, some have formed outright gangs out of bribed or coerced servants, setting them on each other in games of dominance. When security cracks down, it’s the servants who end up dead or deported, while the gentry are simply obliged to find new toys.

This behavior is generally favored by their parents, finding this “leadership experience” to be beneficial for their offspring’s future prospects. Of course, should some pampered child end up perforated by an insufficiently deferential victim, their reactions can be quite spectacular.

### Local Operator Concepts

Immaculately talented local entertainer

Corper who fled after an unforgivable act

Island tech versed in maintaining the corp facilities

Corp scion who’s gone rogue from their past

Ex-corp security who saw too much to stay

Castoff servant who offended their employer

Rotorwing pilot laying low after an incident

Former watchdog hacker who knows too much

## THE FLATS

The New River was hard to tame in the early days of the City, and early flooding wiped out a substantial stretch of pre-Collapse residential and industrial zones on its north bank. The rush of dark silt buried what it didn't sweep away, but the new thirst of the Minnesota desert soon drained away the headwaters. The New River now is a sluggish and filthy thing, winding slow along the north edge of the city core.

In the years since the waters receded, those too poor to find a drier home have set up in "siltburbs" on the flats, making a precarious living out of urban agriculture and building salvage. Many of the old pre-Collapse facilities were sealed tightly against atmospheric pollution and nuclear fallout, so some still retain passable interiors full of valuable old tools and resources. Control over particularly valuable picking grounds is viciously contested by the locals.

"Crayfish", as the locals are often called, are considered a bare step above actual sandies and hardly better than the back-country savages that dwell in the west. This scorn tends to be repaid by the siltburbs, many of which pride themselves on their ability to self-sustain with river-watered fields and looted goods. Even so, most of their finds have to be sold in the City proper if they're to get the supplies they need to survive constant exposure to long-seeping pollution and freshly-unearthed toxins.

### SILTBURBS OF THE FLATS

Unlike most other districts, there is no official city government presence in the Flats. Even gangs are largely absent when they're not coming to buy crayfish finds or plunder a weakened silturb. Instead, the main organizing forces are the several major siltburbs in the area, all of which have more than fifty thousand inhabitants. Five of these are of particular note.

#### Mission Seeds in the Flats

A silturb's water filtration system has broken down and needs a salvaged part from below.

Raiders from Crest or hostile sandies are rampaging and must be dealt with.

A corp is hiring people to retrieve a particularly valuable piece of salvage the locals won't sell.

A silturb doc needs a particular medicine, but the corp that sells it is asking for a special favor for it.

Somebody's recording a VR in the Flats and using the locals as fodder thanks to the lack of local law.

The corps are excavating a site and carelessly risking critical damage to a nearby silturb.

A city official wants to annex Thorton, and is starting by "neutralizing" local leaders.

**Rimville** is built into and around the stacks of an vast abandoned nuclear power plant, the main facility itself a hundred feet down through the mud. Its Boss Maria leads the glow-miners in pulling out valuable technical scrap and the occasional salable fissile material. Local fashion involves complete depilation, often simply to get ahead of the inevitable symptoms of the radiation poisoning that many miners suffer.

**Thorton** is on the riverbank, running the dark waters through an intricate set of scrap-built purification plants to irrigate their crops and sell surplus water to the other siltburbs. Boss Kembe oversees a ferry operation that's the least-monitored way to get across the New River; Thorton's inhabitants make a point of peeling newcomers for all they're worth if they're not strong or canny enough to avoid that fate.

**Bangor** is the most mercantile of the major siltburbs, with its Boss Vivian trading in goods that can only be obtained from the badlands. Its position on the edge of the City's northwestern border makes it the first stop for sandy nomads looking to trade, and Bangor has a habit of "discouraging" any silturb that tries to work around their tariffs. Locals who try to cut deals with the sandies without giving Bangor their share have a habit of waking up in the New River.

**Crest** is a hellhole even by local standards, little more than a seething den of exiles, renegades, and psychopaths too violent to be tolerated by any other crayfish community. Its current Boss Scrape earned his place by seventeen well-chosen murders in less than eighteen minutes, and no other thug is willing to test him just yet. Scrape plays on a mix of resentment and greed to incite raids on other siltburbs. He's clever enough to spread out the pain in a way that's never quite drastic enough to provoke an alliance against him, but he's pushed his luck of late.

**Harmony** is widely considered the strangest of the major siltburbs, its secretive people burrowed into a buried pharmaceuticals lab. Its Elder Rosepetal shares salvaged and homebrew meds with other siltburbs, but she insists on taking payment in "new initiates". Very few new recruits are ever seen again on the surface.

#### Local Operator Concepts

Outsider trying to lay low from a grim pursuer

Silt miner skilled in excavation and salvage

Urban farmer with a knack for improvisation

Riverman who knows all the hidden anchorages

Brutal raider accustomed to lawless life

Ex-sandy unable to completely abandon their kin

City refugee forced to try to make a new life here

Mud hermit who used to seek solitude out here

## FOGTOWN

The corps need factories and refineries for their products, and the City's densest concentration of these facilities are in Fogtown. Broad streets and local utility rails cut up blocks of mazelike factories and smoky processing centers, interspersed here and there with the massive concrete hab towers that house their swarming workers.

Most days, the air in Fogtown is thick enough to taste. A slight dip in the city's terrain and a screen of massive hab towers blocks the prevailing winds, letting the exhalations of the factories pool in the district and stain the buildings yellow and gray. Respirators are a popular fashion accessory in Fogtown, though the most impoverished workers make a point of pride out of their inability to afford them.

Few Fogtowners live long enough to die of the air. The factories of the district treat them as largely expendable inputs, a certain percentage dying every year in industrial accidents or falling prey to toxic exposure. A man in Fogtown is old at forty and ancient at sixty, and probably on his second set of cybernetic lungs.

Most Fogtown factories are owned by third-tier megacorp subsidiaries, deniable organizations that exist purely to feed their masters. The wages are miserable, but the work can be done even by wholly unskilled laborers, so they never lack for hands. The most ambitious and intelligent workers can sometimes claw their way into employment at a factory directly owned by one of the Big Seven. Working conditions in such places are substantially better, and corp-financed medical care can add decades to a worker's life.

The locals of Fogtown have been toying with unionization for decades, to no profitable effect. Every time the movement starts to gain momentum, a flood of refugees or imported labor from a different district is used to dilute the local labor pool.

### Mission Seeds in Fogtown

Gangers have accidentally stolen a truck full of highly illegal hardware, and its buyer is after it.

The CLU from Portside is trying to slip union organizers into Fogtown despite gang resistance.

A particular client needs a factory shut down for a while, but without doing permanent damage to it.

Someone's stolen a critical water purification component. It has to be reclaimed before it's sold.

A shipment of valuable respiratory meds has been lost, and several groups are trying to find it first.

Local competitors are trying to shut down a new, suspiciously-cheap respirator mask factory.

A city LEO unit has gone semi-rogue, becoming a city-sponsored gang under their charismatic boss.

Along with that dilution, the local gangs are almost always willing to add strike breaking to their portfolio in exchange for contributions from the factory owners. They tend to cause more collateral damage than a professional corp-sponsored death squad, but a little public spectacle helps focus the minds of the locals on the dangers of union activity.

When they're not cracking skulls for the corps, the local gangs run protection rackets on the smaller manufacturers and tax the workers for their services in maintaining public order. Some gangs draw their membership from the workers at particular factories, with rival corps using them as proxy militias against each other.

A considerable black market in stolen products and resources also exists in Fogtown, with the gangs fighting over the control of certain recognized bazaar zones. Most of the wares sold there are cheap DRM-free cyber, pharmaceuticals to treat the myriad diseases of the locals, and bulk consumer goods lifted from loading docks and ill-guarded transports. Even so, shoppers with the right connections can get access to military-grade tech from the most heavily-monitored factories in the district if the right palms are greased.

The city government in Fogtown is chiefly concerned with maintaining the basic infrastructure of the district. The factories consume enormous amounts of power and water, and the mass movement of goods and materials requires a huge amount of functional transport. Corp taxes fund the work, but they also need to keep these utilities running in the face of scrappers and saboteurs, the latter of which are sometimes sent by rivals to cause problems for a factory.

The district administrator, Joseph Nguyen, is fully aware of the importance of Fogtown to the City's economy. Over the past several years he has been methodically building support with local law enforcement and maintenance services, bribing them handsomely and overlooking their peculations. Most believe that his money is coming from corp backers who plan to use his power base as a counterbalance to Mayor Korsakoff if she ever proves troublesome.

### Local Operator Concepts

Laborer with extensive cybernetic prosthetics

Labor organizer forced into hiding by gangs

Street doc specializing in environmental diseases

Corporate factory tech who learned too much

Gang member who was on the losing side of a fight

Factory drone operator with a side income

Corp research scientist from a failed project

Factory foreman with muscle and local ties



## GANNETT

Few parts of the City are good, but Gannett is worse than most. The district was only half-built when the Long Winter drove in masses of refugees from barren Midwestern fields and unlivable towns. There was talk of government relief from the Great Lakes Compact, of fishing prospects in Lake Michigan, of security from the roaming bandits who stole whatever food was left.... People talked of many hopes, but Gannett disappointed them all.

In Gannett there are relatively few of the massive hab blocks that are found in other sections of the city, most of them never having been completed by the time of the refugee influx. Most buildings are low-rises cobbled together out of substandard concrete and mildly radioactive steel looted from the Chicago Boneyard. They make for a maze of improvised streets and winding alleyways, and only a native has any chance of making headway away from the major thoroughfares.

Gangs rule Gannett with an impunity unusual even for the City. Government cops don't enter the district for anything short of mass civic disturbance, and then they come in with CASRAs and armored vehicles. Heavily-guarded city work crews maintain the barest minimum of electricity and water supplies in the area, if only to minimize the chances of an uncontrollable uprising. The gangs then move in to control access to these utilities, charging the locals in their territory for the privileges of urban life.

The gangs provide the only real security in Gannett, and every local is either a member of one or pays tribute to one. In exchange, the gangs provide security for their "clients". The quality of this security ranges from an iron-fisted suppression of public disorder to an anarchy moderated only by semi-random murder. Even so, those zones of the district without a functioning gang overlord are all but unlivable to civilians.

### Mission Seeds in Gannett

A gang boss is getting out of hand, and her "clients" need somebody to discourage her.

A local gang has taken over an infrastructure site and is looting it for scrap, despite dire local need.

A collapsed building has become the lair of a psychopathic cyber-augmented killer.

A local business is trying to switch gang allegiances, but their former patron is uncooperative.

A bitter local is playing two gangs off against each other, and they're looking for help with the scheme.

Several gangs are fighting ferociously to control a new infrastructure site, and may end up ruining it.

Somebody fled into Gannett to lay low, and they need to be retrieved before they get killed.

A Gannett citizen unwilling or unable to find a place in the gangs usually scrapes out a living through menial labor or some dangerous employment. Whole divisions of sewer maintainers, building demolition workers, and pollution cleanup crews are made up of Gannett labor, paid a pittance for their daily risk of death. The low wages leave them with nowhere to go but Gannett, all the better to keep the other districts free of their "career criminal presence".

These workers and their outside income feed a network of tiny shops, petty factories, and street vendors that can be found down every twisted alleyway. The gangs feed on these enterprises, squeezing them just hard enough to keep them in business without ever allowing them real prosperity. Corp representatives in Gannett encourage this avarice, as it spares them the trouble of swatting down competitors.

Every so often, however, things get out of hand in Gannett. One infrastructure failure too many, one demagogue a little too successful, one gang unifier with a few too many ambitions, and the usually hopeless denizens of the district go wild. The first disturbance was in 2047, when the first wave of refugees rioted in a desperate uprising. The second was in 2062, when the Second City movement whipped the locals into a frenzy that bled over into nearby districts.

In both cases, the city and the corps cooperated to contain the district, kill the leaders, and crush the resistance. Tens of thousands died, and life became even worse for the survivors. Some residence towers still stand as burnt-out monuments to those desperate risings, still crumbling slowly in a collapse that hasn't finished its fall.

A decade later, the memory of those days has been diluted. A lot of new faces have turned up in Gannett, and a lot of old leaders are gone. New voices are talking about another uprising, another chance to strike at their oppressors in the corps and city government. At least a half-dozen different conspiracies and activist groups are planning various revolts at any one time, though many of the locals are left to wonder how many of them come from the hands of corper masters.

### Local Operator Concepts

Freelance maintenance tech for the locals

Former gang extortionist-slash-protector

Grizzled local thug with numerous ties

Street doc for the truly impoverished

Small business owner struggling to get ahead

Unskilled laborer forced to find a new life

Local hacker versed in subverting infrastructure

Fast courier with a knack for dodging trouble

## PORTSIDE

Citadel guards the suborbital facilities, but Portside handles the water traffic of the city. Close trade ties exist with the Eastern Alliance, and Seawaymax-class freighters make regular journeys up and down the St. Lawrence Seaway carrying iron ore through the Yooper-controlled Soo Locks and bringing finished industrial goods from the eastern cities. Passenger traffic is minimal, but a steady stream of stowaways and crew-jumpers bleeds from the big ships whenever they draw up to the district's mazy docks.

Portside is the de facto property of Legau-Durach, which runs much of the northeastern shipping trade. Their corporate marines fight off pirates from occupied Michigan and ensure polite dealings with whatever Yooper warlord happens to control the locks at Sault Ste. Marie at the moment. The corp's regional HQ is located in Portside, and a half-dozen satellite offices oversee varying aspects of the lake trade logistics.

Street control is in the hands of the **City Longshoreman's Union**, and the CLU is in the hands of Legau-Durach. While the organization is meant to protect the interests of the countless laborers who pack, load, and unload the big lakers, in practice it is riddled with the puppets of Legau-Durach corporate factions.

The **Freedom faction**, under the hand of General Organizer Maria Stein, presents itself as the wise cultivators of future potential, bringing better wages and safer work to the union's membership. Sadly, their efforts are constantly stymied by their rivals in the union, and only when the Freedom faction has complete control can their promises be fulfilled.

The **Equality faction's** leader, Secretary William Lee, blames the working conditions on non-union labor. If the scabs didn't work so cheaply, the union longshoremen might hope for better wages. They're notoriously violent towards supposed offenders.

### Mission Seeds in Portside

An important refugee has made it across the lake, and needs to be found before someone else does.

A client needs a union faction dispute "mediated", with a particular outcome desired.

A profoundly illegal item has been shipped in and must be stolen discreetly from its unwitting holder.

Someone needs to get aboard a laker without being discovered by the crew or workers.

The FLM is making a reprisal attack, and they and the unions are both hiring help.

Legau-Durach needs some temporary muscle to aid their corporate marines on a Michigan job.

The union factions are struggling over control of a newly-opened Portside dock zone.

The **Unity faction**, led by President Jose Guzman, throws its support behind whichever of its rivals is most in need of it, ensuring that the balance of power never goes too far askew. They pride themselves on "working from the inside", cultivating the tightest link with Legau-Durach corpors and being most cooperative about necessary concessions in exchange for special favors to the membership.

Every dock, warehouse, work yard, and nautical business in Portside is under the control of one of these factions, and rival members can expect a beating at the least if they trespass. Scabs can expect worse, especially at the hands of the Equality faction, though desperation drives countless men and women to work in non-union shops for the sake of basic survival.

The **Free Labor Movement** is the closest thing the scabs have to an organization, its leadership forced to stay deep in the shadows to avoid union hit squads. This secretiveness is helped by the steady corporate backing the movement receives in deniable funds and convenient coincidences. The FLM works to check the power of the unions and make it safe for any Portsider to work without paying protection money to union leadership, but their corp backers allow them to be only so successful as is necessary to keep union wages down to a tolerable minimum.

Portside itself is a vast complex of semi-automated wharves and loading zones backed up against a warren of hastily-built industrial facilities for processing the imported goods. Warehouses are crammed up next to residential towers, and whole kilometers of storage facilities lie empty until some sudden surge of trade might fill them for a time.

Numerous pockets of Eastern Alliance expatriates can be found in these abandoned zones, having fled the cargo ships only to find ordinary life in the city difficult without the necessary papers. A number of hacker gangs can be found in Portside dedicated almost entirely to providing false IDs and faked residency permits. Most of them also have a sideline in human trafficking and organlegging for those clients who prove unable to pay their debts.

### Local Operator Concepts

Grizzled scab who knows how to handle trouble

Idealistic union organizer who tried to fix things

Survivor of an aggressively closed L-D branch

Lake sailor who's ended up on dry land

Foreigner who slipped in aboard a laker

Freelance muscle for whichever faction's hiring

Ex-corporate marine versed in nautical violence

Small boat captain trying to survive L-D contracts

## RACHOWSKI

Seat of the city government of New Chicago, Rachowski is the district least subject to corp authority. City hall runs the district with a free hand, though this has resulted in a populace almost wholly dependent on the city government for its survival.

Mayor Elaine Korsakoff keeps her position by the favor of the Big Seven and the tolerance of her subordinates, each of which have their own petty empires under their command. She has no interests other than advancing her own power and independence, and what time she has that isn't eaten up setting her underlings against each other is occupied in playing off mutually-hostile corps. The corp taxes she extracts are the only thing that keeps New Chicago's infrastructure from collapsing, as Korsakoff has no interest in holding the bag should the city fall apart.

Rachowski's populace is sharply divided between "citizens" and "public servants". The former are the masses of desperate, hungry, and ill-housed locals who are forced to find some sort of work among the relatively few corporate outposts in Rachowski. Most work for the perpetually-tottering mass of small shops and local businesses that have grown up in the absence of the megacorps, each one knowing that they can only grow so large before the corps will stamp them out.

The "public servants" are those fortunate enough to have a municipal job, whether janitor or senior bureau director. They have first call on all the resources extracted from the megacorps and are an unabashed ruling class over their citizen lessers. In return for their "selfless public service" they have tacit legal immunity to anything short of an offense against a more important public servant and are a terror to their impoverished neighbors. Even so, there's hardly a citizen in Rachowski who wouldn't slit his own mother's throat to get a janitorial position with the City.

### Mission Seeds in Rachowski

A gang went too far and bit the official hand that fed them. Consequences must be inflicted.

A now-dead city official stockpiled a trove of precious graft for the taking, if only it can be found.

A city official's department would obtain much more funding if a rival's project were to fail badly.

An official has double-crossed their corp patron, and now the knives are out for them.

A local business owner is too successful, and is now being leaned on by a corp that wants them gone.

A city neighborhood desperately needs city services, but the bureaucrats need inducement.

Local infrastructure failed disastrously, and now blame must be dodged by those responsible.

Rachowski's main business is extraction. The city government squeezes taxes out of the corps to keep the whole shambling edifice running and the citizenry offers entertainments and meeting places out from under a constant corporate eye. Brothels, nightclubs, bars, sporting arenas, and parks litter the district, many of them city-funded along with their allotment of public servant maintainers. Sometimes those employees actually work, but most of them accept the money as a simple sinecure, subcontracting a pittance to local citizens to do what absolutely must be done. Even the maintenance staff is quick to pawn off their duties on a constantly-available corps of hungry street techs.

Rachowski exists as something of a meeting ground for the city corps. None of them have large security forces in the district, so when two sides need to meet someplace relatively neutral, it's often a Rachowski nightclub that serves as the venue. Most of these talks are conducted discreetly with no more security than can be unobtrusively filtered into the area. As such, it's not unknown for third parties to become kinetically involved in the situation when someone prefers to have the negotiations or the negotiators spoiled.

Lately, a number of local gangs have started to parasitize the city government itself. They'll sabotage infrastructure, assassinate low-ranking public servants, and cause just enough trouble to merit a payoff from some harried bureaucrat. These same bureaucrats are starting to militarize their favorite pets, siphoning cash out of their departmental budget for "security reasons", and to have a semi-reliable corps of legbreakers to handle problems that can't be brought to city law enforcement.

A few of these gangs are starting to push this modus vivendi too far, however. They're beginning to target important officials and have started to lay unofficial claim to fiefdoms inside the district. The city government can tolerate a great many leeches, but it absolutely cannot risk losing its minimal control of large-scale civic violence. It seems likely that these ambitious gangs will soon learn as much the hard way.

### Local Operator Concepts

Bureaucratic dogsbody sick of their former life

Muscle that made a living as an official's thug

Subcontractor tech blamed for an official's error

Anti-corp activist who avoided corp-held districts

Aspiring reformer trying to work the city gov

Fixer who provided things for slumming visitors

Entertainer for the numerous tourist corpsers

Ganger from a now-crushed gang that went too far



## MIXING SINE NOMINE GAMES TOGETHER

It's perfectly natural that some GMs would want to mix the cyberpunk world of *Cities Without Number* with the sci-fi future of *Stars Without Number* or the far-future fantasy of *Worlds Without Number*. The basic rules for all three games are compatible, but there are a few caveats to keep in mind when blending them.

### CHOOSING A BASE RULE SET

The presumption of this book is that you're going to be playing a *Cities Without Number* game with extra content from the others added in. This need not necessarily be the case, however; you might be running a *Stars Without Number* game and want to add in extra cyberware for your star-faring heroes.

If you're creating a new campaign from scratch, however, you need to decide up front which set of rules will form the base for your campaign. Most often, this is going to be the rule set that corresponds to the overall flavor of the campaign. A fantasy game with arcanotech weaponry and golem-mechs might use WWN as the base with SWN add-ons, while one focused on a dark noir technofuture with things that go bump in the night might use CWN as the baseline with WWN bits added in.

The reason for making this choice up front is to limit potential confusion where small differences exist in rules or mechanics. Each of the three games mentioned is tuned to fit its particular genre, whether that means sudden lethal perforations in CWN's Trauma Die or sword & sorcery-style fast natural recuperation in WWN. These details can be tweaked if they don't match your particular vision for your campaign, but it's most convenient to have a clear baseline to start.

### CYBERWARE IN OTHER SETTINGS

It's very likely that some GMs will want to bring in cyberpunk-style chrome for their sci-fi SWN campaigns. Some might even want to bolt in magical body augmentations or eldritch tattoos for a fantasy WWN campaign. A few things need to be remembered.

**Cyber makes PCs stronger.** Cyberware lets players convert cash into direct personal power, not unlike a magic item shop. PCs that have access to cyber are going to punch above their weight class, particularly if they start investing in expensive extra-action cyber or if their body weaponry outclasses the conventional melee weaponry found in the setting. This may be perfectly acceptable to a GM, but it should be understood.

**Cyber costs need scaling.** Use the table below to get a rough estimate of how to convert the existing dollar cost of cyber to SWN credits or WWN silver pieces. If you're using a gold-based fantasy setting, treat the WWN prices as gold pieces. These rates assume that PCs should be able to afford some cyber as they level up; scarcer availability may raise prices.

**Cyber in other settings should not need maintenance.**

Maintenance in CWN is meant as a constant cash sink forcing the PCs to take riskier missions to afford their body rent. For campaign settings where this motivation doesn't make sense, it should be skipped.

| Cyberware and Surgery Costs              | Mult  |
|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Credit cost for scarce-cyber SWN setting | x4    |
| Credit cost for uncommon-cyber setting   | x2    |
| Credit cost for common-cyber setting     | x1    |
| Silver cost for scarce-cyber WWN setting | x1    |
| Silver cost for uncommon-cyber setting   | x0.75 |
| Silver cost for common-cyber setting     | x0.5  |

### CYBERWARE FOR WWN MAGES

Spellcasting classes from WWN, including partial classes, cannot use cyberware. High Magic is so powerful that if they could get enhanced reflexes plus *Coruscating Coffin* they'd be too much for most tables.

Other classes that use Effort use the same rules as the *Spellcaster* Edge for cyber's penalty to their maximum Effort. Thus Bards, Healers, Vowed, and other Effort-using PCs can take some cyber if they're willing to permanently sacrifice some of their maximum Effort, but they can't afford to take much of it and still function as their class.

### WEAPON TRAUMA DICE

The weapons listed in WWN and SWN don't include Trauma Dice, as those genres don't usually have quite the bang-you're-dead lethality at higher levels that cyberpunk encourages. If you like the Trauma Die and want to use it with those other games, you can use it as given in CWN.

The tables in this book have Trauma Die and Trauma Rating scores for most types of weapons; if there's not a direct equivalent listed here, just assign the closest match. If you're completely lost, you can use the guidelines below.

A 1d6 die is for small weapons, pistols, or those unlikely to deliver a one-shot kill on a hit. 1d8 is for medium and large melee weapons and rifles. 1d10 is for shotguns and other large, destructive firearms that are likely to kill someone instantly with one good hit. 1d12 is the realm of explosives and other weapons that are expected to insta-splatter a victim, and 1d20 is what you use when it's a matter of maybe having a slight chance of living through a hit.

For Trauma Ratings, x2 is for weapons that Trauma often but don't necessarily put the target down, or for weapons that have limited flesh-destroying power. The x3 rating is the baseline, and x4 is for weapons that are meant to instantly drop a Trauma'd victim.

## ARMOR FROM OTHER GAMES

Mixing WWN armor, SWN armor, and CWN weaponry can be a bit murky, as CWN armor has different AC ratings for ranged and melee combat, as well as Damage Soak and Trauma Target bonuses.

As such, the table below provides conversions for all the major forms of armor from both games. If something novel turns up, you can match it to the closest equivalent on the table.

Primitive armor is unlikely to show up in most modern-era or sci-fi games, though primitive lost-worlders or impoverished slum gangers might be forced to throw together something that doesn't rely on ballistic inserts. It's provided on the table below for GMs running a fantasy-based game with CWN rules.

The prices given are calibrated to a cyberpunk world. Most primitive armor is either makeshift stuff stitched together out of scrap or custom-built boutique armor for reenactors or ceremonial use. Sci-fi armor such as deflector arrays and force paves wouldn't be available on the open market at all, while more sophisticated armor would have a price reflecting its conventional armor competition. For games where high-tech TL5 gear is actually available on the market, the GM should calibrate the prices accordingly, charging a premium for the very best equipment.

Note that the armor listed here is all suit armor which cannot add on extra accessories. It's the GM's choice as to which, if any, of these types of armor can be found in cheaper obsolete forms.

| Armor Type            | Ranged | Melee | Damage | Trauma |            |         | Cost     | Note  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|------------|---------|----------|-------|
|                       | AC     | AC    | Soak   | Enc.   | Target Mod | Subtle? |          |       |
| War Shirt             | 11     | 11    | 0      | 0      | 0          | Subtle  | \$5      | P     |
| Buff Coat             | 12     | 12    | 2      | 0      | 0          | Subtle  | \$25     | P     |
| Linothorax            | 13     | 13    | 5      | 1      | +1         | Obvious | \$50     | P     |
| War Robe              | 14     | 14    | 5      | 3      | +1         | Obvious | \$200    | P     |
| Pieced Armor          | 14     | 14    | 5      | 2      | +1         | Obvious | \$100    | P     |
| Mail Shirt            | 14     | 14    | 2      | 1      | +1         | Subtle  | \$400    | P,S   |
| Cuirass and Greaves   | 15     | 15    | 8      | 2      | +1         | Obvious | \$500    | P,S   |
| Scaled Armor          | 16     | 16    | 5      | 3      | +1         | Obvious | \$500    | P,S   |
| Mail Hauberk          | 16     | 16    | 5      | 2      | +2         | Obvious | \$800    | P,H   |
| Plate Armor           | 17     | 17    | 10     | 2      | +2         | Obvious | \$1,000  | P,H   |
| Great Armor           | 19     | 19    | 15     | 3      | +2         | Obvious | \$3,000  | P,H   |
| Grand Plate           | 16     | 16    | 10     | 3      | +3         | Obvious | \$5,000  | P,H,A |
| Primitive Shield      | 13/+1  | 13/+1 | 0      | 1      | 0          | Obvious | \$50     | P, &  |
| Warpaint              | 12     | 12    | 0      | 0      | 0          | Obvious | \$50     |       |
| Armored Undersuit     | 13     | 13    | 2      | 0      | +1         | Subtle  | \$300    |       |
| Secure Clothing       | 13     | 13    | 2      | 1      | +1         | Subtle  | \$200    |       |
| Armored Vacc Suit     | 13     | 13    | 5      | 2      | +2         | Obvious | \$5,000  |       |
| Deflector Array       | 18     | 18    | 5      | 0      | +2         | Subtle  | N/A      |       |
| Force Pavis           | 15/+1  | 15/+1 | 0      | 1      | 0          | Obvious | N/A      |       |
| Security Armor        | 14     | 14    | 5      | 1      | +1         | Obvious | \$400    |       |
| Woven Body Armor      | 15     | 15    | 5      | 2      | +1         | Obvious | \$600    |       |
| Combat Field Uniform  | 16     | 16    | 5      | 1      | +2         | Obvious | \$10,000 |       |
| Vestimentum           | 18     | 18    | 10     | 0      | +3         | Obvious | N/A      | D     |
| Assault Suit          | 18     | 18    | 15     | 2      | +3         | Obvious | \$25,000 | D     |
| Storm Armor           | 19     | 19    | 20     | 2      | +4         | Obvious | N/A      | D     |
| Field Emitter Panoply | 20     | 20    | 15     | 1      | +4         | Obvious | N/A      | D     |

**H:** The armor applies its Encumbrance as a penalty to all Sneak or Exert skill checks.

**S:** The armor applies its Encumbrance as a penalty to all Sneak skill checks.

**P:** The armor is primitive. Unless magical, it has a ranged AC 10 versus all firearms, but Damage Soak still applies.

**A:** Immune to primitive melee/thrown weapons unless the Shock hits AC 16+, it's two-handed, or they're grappled

**D:** Immune to primitive melee weapons, grenades, unarmed attacks, and low-tech firearms

**&:** This shield works like a Riot Shield, except it has no benefit or granted AC versus firearms.

## USING CLASSES FROM OTHER SINE NOMINE GAMES

*Cities Without Number*, *Stars Without Number*, and *Worlds Without Number* all share the same basic game system. It's very predictable that a GM might want to allow classes from those other games to be included in their own campaigns. You can certainly do so, but there are a few things to keep in mind. At the very start, you need to decide whether you mean to allow these other classes as actual classes or as Edges.

Note that in both cases, it is always and entirely up to the GM to allow or deny any particular class combination. Even a combination which isn't intrinsically excessive might be too much for a particular campaign. GMs who give a PC the benefit of the doubt in allowing a combination should always feel free to oblige them to rewrite it later if it turns out the mix is overshadowing the rest of the group or spoiling the fun of the table as a whole.

### CLASSES AS CLASSES

If you run things this way, PCs who want to play outside classes do not use the Edge system in CWN. Instead, they use the rules in the other game for picking full or partial classes. If they want to be a Vowed with a martial bent, they play a partial Warrior/partial Vowed. If they want to fling High Magic, they might play a full High Mage. Would-be Psychics might

choose to be a partial Expert/partial Psychic. No PC playing an outside class gets any Edges.

This method limits the flexibility of a PC slightly, but is easy to implement and likely to produce fewer unexpected interactions, as the classes were designed to work this way originally. This same principle can even be used to include classes from other OSR games.

### CLASSES AS EDGES

With this method of running things, outside partial classes count as one Edge and outside full classes count as two Edges. Thus, a PC who wanted to be a partial Necromancer/partial High Mage would have to spend two Edges to do so.

This is a more flexible way of handling things, but it's also more prone to imbalances, as the original classes were not built to interact this way. With that in mind, you should keep two rules in place.

**Class Edges must be bought at first level.** You can't get to fifth level and then decide to become a wizard. If you want an outside class, you pick it at first level.

**Full WWN spellcasters, full SWN Psychics, or dual partial spellcasters don't get a third Edge at fifth level.** Magic is powerful, and a PC who chooses to devote their talents entirely to spellcasting needs to pay something extra to justify the ability.

## SPECIFIC CLASS RULES

Once you have decided whether you're going to use outside classes as actual classes or as Edges, there remain a few guidelines to keep in mind about specific classes in a CWN campaign world. The sections below call out a few things to keep in mind when including particular outside classes.

### PSYCHIC

It's possible to include the Psychic character class from SWN in a cyberpunk campaign, but a few limits should be kept in mind.

**Psychics cannot learn magic.** It is strongly recommended that you not let psychic PCs get the magical Edges given in the deluxe version of this book; mixing both power sources tends to give a PC too much flexibility. By the same token, you shouldn't let Psychics partial into WWN spellcaster classes either.

**Teleportation is not available.** In a sci-fi setting where fast long-distance travel is trivial and tech-based teleportation is not particularly shocking, the ability to pop in and out of places is not excessive. In a genre often revolving around heists, it's too much. Depending on the flavor of your game, you might also selectively eliminate certain techniques, or cap psychic skill levels at a lower level than 4. If psychic powers are

something rare and special in your world, having less of them than a SWN Psychic is still a substantial perk.

**Psychics cannot get Nerve cyberware.** Letting psychics pick up skillplugs mitigates their class downside of having to spend their skill points on learning techniques. Letting them pick up the extra-action cyber lets them combo psychic powers with physical actions, which tends to be too much. In-world, you can just explain it as a matter of invasive brain surgery being a bad idea for psychic power users.

### WARRIOR

In a typical CWN campaign, PCs picking the Warrior class should use the one printed in *Stars Without Number*, not the one in *Worlds Without Number*. The latter includes the *Killing Blow* class ability to help compensate for the lower-tech weapons available in a fantasy setting. When everyone and their pet dog has a shotgun, this perk is no longer appropriate.

If your campaign baseline is a fantasy world, however, and you're just borrowing cyber rules for magical prostheses and the like, you should use the WWN version of the Warrior. When a 1d8 longbow is the best most people can get, a little extra damage helps boost a combat-focused PC.



## EXPERT

The Expert class can generally be used as-is regardless of the campaign setting. The PC who is good at skills is a broad trope and there's usually something worthwhile for them to burn their extra skill points on in almost any campaign.

## HIGH MAGES

Any PC with access to High Magic is going to have much stronger sorcery than any Mage using the cyber-fantasy spellcasting rules in the deluxe version of this book. A GM is entirely justified in disallowing WWN spells in their cyber-fantasy campaign, because they're largely tuned for a world where NPCs and monsters have equally fearsome magics at their disposal. Much as with psychics, High Mages need to keep two points in mind.

**High Mages cannot take magical Edges from the deluxe version of this book.** They can't be Graced, they can't be a spellcasting Mage, and they can't be a spirit-calling Summoner. Mixing the scarce, powerful magic of a High Mage with the much easier but weaker casting of a Mage tends to give a PC too many options.

**The corps and government have anti-magic tech.** It's not trivially simple to knock down concrete bridges with the *Decree of Lithic Dissolution* or enslave a corp CEO with the *Obnubilation of the Will*. While low-level opposition won't have much in the way of anti-magic defenses, professionals can be expected to know what a High Mage can do and have items or skills to deal with it. A GM should tune these defenses so that High Magic is always useful but seldom a one-shot solution to a problem. Such balancing is delicate, and the right mix will depend on a table's tastes.

## NECROMANCERS AND ELEMENTALISTS

These specialist casters follow the same guidelines as those for High Mages, with a few specific tweaks.

**Necromancers need undead.** If your campaign setting doesn't give undead a meaningful place, a necromancer isn't going to have much fun. The restless dead don't need to appear in every mission, but they should show up often enough for the PC to have a modest supply of undead minions or targets for their special powers.

**The Elemental Blast art of elementlists is modified in a cyberpunk game.** Since common ranged weapons are stronger in those campaigns, it does 1d10 base damage instead of 1d6. It also has a Trauma Die of 1d8 with a x2 Trauma multiplier.

## VOWED

Vowed can generally be used as-is, but their Martial Style damage needs to be upgraded to be competitive with *Body Blade* cyber. From levels 1-3 Martial Style counts as *Body Blades I* cyber. From 4-7 it counts as *Body Blades II* cyber, and each level after 7 adds a +1 bonus to its damage roll, but not its Shock.

## HEALER

Healers don't generally fit well in cyberpunk settings. Traditional cyberpunk heists are fast; PCs hit the target and get away rather than spending hours crawling around in a dungeon or weeks roaming a wilderness. They usually have plenty of downtime between missions to heal with conventional medical methods, and they don't have enough free System Strain to soak up much healing in combat. GMs should make very certain that a Healer PC actually has a place in what the party plans to do.

If allowed, a Healer can generally be used as-is. Their *Limb Restoration* art is generally sufficient to fix Major Injuries, but lesser healing methods cannot restore such serious damage. Their *Healer's Knife* art has a Trauma rating of 1d10/x3.

## OLD-SCHOOL MAGIC-USERS

Some GMs might want to bring in classic B/X Magic-Users or other old-school classes that rely on traditional Vancian spells from the earlier editions of the world's most famous fantasy RPG.

The same basic principles apply for these classic Magic-Users as are applied to High Mages. Unlike High Mages, however, there's no convenient "partial Magic-User" class for those PCs who only want a taste of fell sorcery. GMs who want to allow partial old-school Magic-Users can use the class as written but limit their spells-per-day as if they were half their level, rounded up. Thus, a first-level partial B/X Magic-User could cast one first-level spell, while a tenth-level partial B/X Magic-User could cast two first, two second, and one third-level spell. They still count as their full level for spell effect purposes, so that latter wizard still throws a 10d6 fireball.

## OTHER OSR CLASSES

Because the *Without Number* games use the same basic chassis as many other Old School Renaissance games do, it's generally possible to import classes from these other games without too much difficulty. If a game bills itself as being compatible with the early editions of the world's most famous fantasy RPG, you can probably strip it for parts.

When importing these outside classes, a GM is generally best off using them wholesale, with the "classes as classes" rules explained on the prior page. Trying to slice them up into Edges or part them out into partial classes is often more work than a GM wants to deal with, so it's easiest to just use them as written.

Keep in mind, however, that you shouldn't usually bother including anything your players don't actually ask for. You can have a hundred different specialist professions in your campaign world, but if none of your players ask to be one of them, it's not worth your time to try to turn it into a PC class. Don't spend your effort on it if it's not going to be rewarded at the table.

## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

*Cities Without Number* has been written to be easy on the GM, and that means the prior two-hundred-odd pages of the book are available in a free PDF version that can be easily passed to players. It can be difficult to persuade a group to try out a new game, and if they have to pay for the privilege it can be an insurmountable barrier.

The next section, however, is a reward for those generous souls who've elected to buy the deluxe PDF version or the print version of the book. It includes a considerable amount of bonus material to help facilitate certain types of campaigns or give new options to a GM who enjoys their inclusion.

You are welcome to share relevant parts of the book with players who want to take advantage of the new class options but can't afford a PDF of their own. The deluxe PDF has no DRM on it, and you've permission to pass it over to the player for their own use if it proves helpful.

Within this supplemental section you'll find a number of new options for your campaign, if you choose to use them.

**Cyber product line quirks** are available for GMs who want some mechanical distinction between different manufacturers of the same cyber.

**Variant humanity** offers several origin Foci as working examples of how to do transhumans, gengi-neered humans, or other not-entirely-baseline PCs.

**Cyber alienation** includes rules for negative psychological effects for the use of excess cyber, to help emulate the mental strain that some cyberpunk settings associate with heavy chrome.

**Cheap cyber** is a set of variant rules for dropping the base cost of cyber for more cyber-common worlds.

**Magic in the City** gives a default explanation for including fantasy elements in the example setting of the City, for those GMs who want sorcery to go with their chrome.

**Mages and spellcasting** are rules for creating spell-slinging Mage PCs in campaign settings that have need of them.

**Summoners and spirit calling** provide mechanics for spirit-summoning characters and statistics for these supernatural entities.

**Magic-User Foci** include a set of three example Foci to show how you can use Focus picks to give mages specific limitations and unique benefits tied to their magic.

**The Graced** provides an example class of PCs who fuel their physical prowess with magical power, giving an alternative to cybernetic enhancement.

**Magic items** are a selection of magical weapons, arcane elixirs, and spell-containing cysts and wands. Because CWN is an old-school game, you can also easily loot existing magic items from other fantasy games of that genre.

A GM should keep in mind that all the rules in this section are purely optional. You should not feel obligated to include any of them if they do not fit the image you have for your campaign. In the same vein, you should feel free to chop, rearrange, and edit these rules as your own table's needs require. Even a balanced, reasonable baseline isn't always going to fit the specific needs of a particular group of people.



# CYBER PRODUCT LINE QUIRKS

The example cyber systems given in the book are designed to be generic baseline systems, ones that the PCs can later customize with mods to suit their own needs. They're not particularly attached to specific manufacturers or product lines.

Sometimes, however, you want to give the cyber from a particular manufacturer a specific product identity and style.

To do so, roll or pick a positive quality from the table below. This is the thing the company's cyber is good at, whether in this particular product line or their offerings as a whole. Then pick or roll a negative quality as a weakness shared by the line. Optionally, roll or pick a complication for obtaining the cyber.

Different product lines from the same company might share qualities or have their own traits. If you decide to make a system with more positive qualities than negative, prices should increase by at least 100% for each positive trait in excess of the negatives.

## d6 How Can You Get It?

- |   |                                                                                                                            |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | It's available in all the usual places at the usual prices for systems of its kind.                                        |
| 2 | It's exclusive to corp retail outlets and will cost 20% more to get a usable system.                                       |
| 3 | It's a sub-licensed line only available through a third party who usually restricts it to their own clients and personnel. |
| 4 | It's strictly black market, having been pulled from public sale for some reason, and might cost up to 50% more than usual. |
| 5 | It's available only at a specific retail outlet that only sells to verified clientele.                                     |
| 6 | The entire production run was sold through some time ago, and getting it now means finding someone willing to sell theirs. |

## d12 Positive Product Line Quality

- |    |                                                                                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Detachable</b> , wired to be removed or attached easily within one minute. System Strain recovers normally.       |
| 2  | <b>Discount</b> , costing only 75% of the base cyber cost.                                                           |
| 3  | <b>Discreet</b> , with the cyber's obviousness level decreased by one step, down to a minimum of "Medical".          |
| 4  | <b>Easy Install</b> , with automatic cyber installation success on anything but a natural 2 on the skill check.      |
| 5  | <b>Fashionable</b> , allowing a once/day +1 bonus on a Reaction Roll from someone who might be impressed.            |
| 6  | <b>Harmonious</b> , with the cyber's System Strain cost reduced by 25%.                                              |
| 7  | <b>Low Maintenance</b> , with maintenance only required half as often to keep it functional.                         |
| 8  | <b>Moddable</b> , with the first cyberware mod installed in it requiring no Maintenance from a tech.                 |
| 9  | <b>Reliable</b> , with all hacking attempts made against it suffering a -1 skill check penalty.                      |
| 10 | <b>Sturdy</b> , still functions for 1d6 days without repair after a Major Injury that would otherwise disable it.    |
| 11 | <b>Supportive</b> , wired to assist in maintaining the user's health, granting a +5 bonus to their maximum HP.       |
| 12 | <b>Synergistic</b> , for each system from this product line, all their System Strain costs are -10%, to 50% minimum. |

## d12 Negative Product Line Quality

- |    |                                                                                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Demanding</b> , with a 25% increased System Strain cost.                                                          |
| 2  | <b>Draining</b> , inflicting a -5 penalty on the user's maximum HP, down to a minimum of 1.                          |
| 3  | <b>Expensive</b> , costing 150% of the base cyber cost.                                                              |
| 4  | <b>Finicky Install</b> , with a -1 penalty on the skill check for installing the cyberware.                          |
| 5  | <b>Fussy</b> , with all maintenance costs doubled.                                                                   |
| 6  | <b>Jealous</b> , adding 10% to the SS cost of all competing cyber systems installed of the same cyber location type. |
| 7  | <b>Noisy</b> , with its active use audibly noticeable up to 5 meters away.                                           |
| 8  | <b>Obvious</b> , with the cyber's obviousness level increased by one step up to "Sight".                             |
| 9  | <b>Overtuned</b> , with any cyberware mods counting double for Maintenance purposes.                                 |
| 10 | <b>Unreliable</b> , with a 1 in 12 chance of simply not working for a scene the first time it's important each day.  |
| 11 | <b>Unsupported</b> , with all maintenance costs increasing by x5 at a point 2d4 months from now.                     |
| 12 | <b>Vulnerable</b> , granting hacking attempts against it a +1 bonus to the skill roll.                               |



# VARIANT HUMANITY

Some campaign settings involve multiple non-baseline human species, ones different enough to deserve mechanical representation in the rules. This section provides a few Origin Foci that can be taken by players who'd like to play something different. As usual, the existence of these variants in a given campaign world is strictly the GM's choice; they don't fit into every cyberpunk dystopia, and the GM shouldn't allow them unless they are very certain they belong.

Belonging to one of the human sub-species listed in this section costs a Focus pick, one that usually has to be made when the character is created. If a lot of the players want to play non-baselines, a charitable GM might let players take their second level Focus pick in advance at first level in order to pay for it.

If your campaign setting doesn't already include origin explanations for these subtypes, you can use the explanation provided below, replacing the corp participants with likely organizations specific to your world.

## VARIANT HUMANITY

Genetic engineering has always been somewhat underdeveloped compared to the advances in computing and cybernetics. Manipulating living flesh through the clumsy tools of genetic editing and chemical adjustment has always been far less precise and replicable than the changes that can be imposed by a cybernetic implant. Even so, some corporations have persisted in this research.

Xenogen Technologies was one such corp, a joint subsidiary of several of the biggest biotech megacorps in the world. It was never entirely clear why they agreed to jointly control Xenogen's experiments; most think that they simply didn't trust each other with exclusive access to such explosively sensitive data.

Xenogen was not just nibbling around the edges of human alteration. They were conducting experiments in breeding and gene modification that would have been outrageously illegal to anyone but a megacorp, pioneering techniques of physical and mental adjustment that had virtually no consideration for the long-term consequences on the health of their subjects.

Initial variant models such as the eloi and skyborn were first created from adult baseline 'volunteers', but morlocks and ogres proved too divergent for a survivable transformation. Xenogen executives soon shifted their production focus to corporate creches where variants could be birthed, raised, and rented out on labor indentures to other corporations. In corporate circles, variants were considered patentable biological products rather than human beings, and Xenogen had great expectations for a subscription model of on-demand variant labor.

Those expectations were disappointed. After the first few generations of variant humanity had entered

the market, a coordinated strike by five separate teams of corp-backed operatives resulted in the detonation of tactical nuclear devices at all five of Xenogen's known research facilities over the course of a single five-minute span. The collateral damage was considerable, but the team sponsors have never been provably identified to the public.

Since then, surviving variants have established populations in certain urban zones, some forming their own local subcultures and societies. No extant corp admits to further research on their creation.

## ELOI

The first variant developed by Xenogen, the eloi were designed as an appealing face for variant humanity. Tall, slender, and perfectly proportioned, the eloi are considerably more attractive than most baseline humans. Most have sharply pointed ears, a trait embedded as a legal maneuver to reinforce Xenogen's intellectual property rights over their genomic patterns.

Aside from being more attractive than baselines, eloi also have much better-developed neuromuscular control and eyes capable of seeing clearly in low-light conditions. Metabolic refinements ensure an exceptionally long lifespan if not curtailed by injury or disease. Most scientists believe that a healthy eloi can live up to three centuries.

Like all Xenogen variants, eloi are interfertile with baselines and other variants. Children have even odds of being born as one of their parents' genetic types, occasionally with minor traits of the other.

**Focus Benefits:** Gain Notice as a bonus skill. Gain +1 to either your Dex or Cha modifier, to a maximum of +2. Gain low-light vision.

## SKYBORN

Xenogen's second offering, the skyborn, were optimized for life aboard orbital habitats or in otherwise inclement environments. Quickly dubbed "canners" by the general populace for their use in orbital habitat "cans", they also found employment in hostile Earth-side badlands and industrial zones.

A canner rarely stands taller than 1.4 meters, though their muscular bodies weigh as much as full-sized baselines. They tend to be considerably tougher and stronger than ordinary humanity, and their eyes are capable of detecting infrared light, the better to identify thermal leaks in an orbital module.

While not optimized for longevity the way the eloi were, a canner's intrinsic toughness and resistance to toxins and pathogens give them a projected active lifespan of over a century.

**Focus Benefits:** Gain +1 to your Str or Con modifier, to a maximum of +2. Gain a +2 bonus to all Physical and Mental saving throws. Gain infrared vision.

## MORLOCK

Third of Xenogen's variant lines, the marketing name for this subtype never stuck. As their first creations had been eloi, these were morlocks, and the name soon became standard even in Xenogen corporate documents.

Morlocks were the product of biological compromises that had been avoided in the earlier human variants. Certain mental and physical debilities were accepted as tolerable prices to pay in exchange for exceptional physical augmentation, and some corporate memos even pointed it out as an advantage in their anticipated roles as low-level corporate enforcers and menial laborers.

The average morlock is a little over two meters tall, heavily muscled, and fanged. Some have almost bestial, muzzle-like features, while other variants have more conventional faces. Physically, they are both stronger and hardier than baseline humans, and have low-light vision comparable to that of the eloi.

These holistic physical improvements required neural modifications, ones that had noticeable costs in long-term memory and the ability to mentally model hypotheticals. The differences between them and baselines were not large, but they were enough to disturb the public and give most morlocks a reputation as reckless, thoughtless thugs, whether or not it was deserved.

Perhaps worst of all, their genetic augmentations put such a severe stress on their organs that most morlocks could expect to die of systemic failure well before their fiftieth birthday. Only exceedingly expensive prosthetic cyber has any chance of prolonging their lives beyond this point. Given the certainty of early death, many morlocks find no reason to be overly careful with their lives.

**Focus Benefits:** Gain Exert as a bonus skill. Gain a +1 bonus to both Str and Con modifiers, up to a maximum of +2. Suffer a -1 penalty to either your Int or Wis modifier. Gain low-light vision.

## OGRE

Last and most extreme of the publicly-acknowledged variant gene lines, the creation of the ogres is generally held to be the act that provoked the final destruction of Xenogen. A limited number were bred before the termination of the program, but many of these survived to form families and small communities of their own.

The average male ogre stands about 2.7 meters tall, lessened somewhat by their habitual slouch. Their skin is exceptionally tough, plated at points with a bone-like organic armor that usually forms in symmetrical patterns on their body. Their arms are somewhat longer by proportion than human limbs, and their facial features are usually coarse, with maws fanged like an oversized morlock. A few sub-strains have more conventional human features, however, and ogres with a baseline parent can look almost like giant humans.

Ogres all possess tremendous physical strength and durability, but the cognitive burdens that appear in morlocks are even more emphasized in their strain. Xenogen evidently intended for them to replace morlocks as brute muscle and laborers, and they were willing to inflict significant genetic damage in order to maximize certain traits. An ogre's greater size helps limit the efficiency burden on individual organs, however, so one might live to sixty or even sixty-five before dying of systemic organ failure.

Ogres remain rare enough that most people know them only by reputation, and that reputation is not a good one. To the ordinary difficulties of living in a human-sized world, an ogre regularly has to deal with people who either fear violence from them or are trying to trick the "dumb brute". It's not surprising that few ogres make much effort towards sociability, though a few doggedly attempt to prove their "civilized" credentials.

**Focus Benefits:** Replace your Strength score with 14 if it's less than 14. Gain a +1 to both Str and Con modifiers, up to a maximum of +3. Suffer a -1 penalty to both your Int and Dex modifiers, and to your choice of Wis or Cha modifiers. You gain a +2 bonus to all Strength-based damage rolls, not including Shock, and your base ranged and melee AC is 14. You don't require an Exert skill check to lift, break, or throw anything humanly possible for a baseline human to handle. You possess infrared vision. Armor and other worn gear specifically sized for humans costs twice as much for you.



# CYBER ALIENATION

In the default cyber rules, chrome does not cause dramatic psychological changes in of itself. The new senses, capabilities, and needs of the cyber may have consequences on a user's thinking, but these changes aren't reified in game mechanics. This works for many cyberpunk settings, but some GMs prefer to use worlds where replacing half your brain with wiring makes you considerably less human in your thinking.

## ALIENATION

Cyber causes a progressive distancing of the user from the normal human condition. The constant barrage of synthetic nerve impulses, hormonal modifications, and neural compromises necessary to integrate cold metal with living flesh forces an adaptation process not unlike the creation of psychological scar tissue. The user must adapt to these alterations in ways that are not always rational, productive, or non-homicidal.

This adaptation is called **Alienation**, and it's counted in points much like System Strain. A user's total begins at zero and they gain points as they add cybernetics. If these points ever exceed the user's Wisdom score, they break down entirely and become an NPC, incapable of functioning in a human society.

Rumors that certain corps find it useful to intentionally provoke symptoms of this cyber-induced psychosis in their security staff are, of course, scurrilous slander.

## GAINING AND LOSING ALIENATION

Campaigns that involve cybernetic alienation do so under three particular rules.

**When a user adds a cybernetic system, they gain permanent Alienation equal to its System Strain cost, rounded up to the nearest whole number.** If it's Nerve cyberware, this total is increased by +2 per system. Mods or Focus abilities that lower the System Strain cost of a mod can also lower its Alienation cost, as the system is made less intrusive or more finely-tuned to the user. Eye or ear mods discounted by cybereyes or cyberears still round up to 1 Alienation each, however.

**Users can also gain Alienation if they fail an Alienation check as described below.** Their failure has aggravated their psychological condition, and they're forced to deal with the fallout and contain the influence of their chrome on their thinking. This added Alienation might push the total above their maximum, causing an incapacitating cyber-induced psychosis.

**To lose Alienation, the user must spend a week in therapy with a skilled cyberpsychologist or another PC with Talk-1 and Heal-1 skills.** NPCs usually charge about \$2,000 a week for this service. At the end, the user's Alienation score drops by one point. It cannot drop below the permanent Alienation induced by their cyberware. Removing cyberware will lower this minimum.

## CYBER-INDUCED PSYCHOSIS

A subject whose Alienation score rises above their Wisdom attribute score breaks down entirely, becoming enslaved to their existing adaptations. They become a GM-controlled NPC who acts solely to fulfill the impulses of any chrome syndromes they may have with no regard for law, morality, or long-term prudence.

**The only way to rescue a CIP victim is to subdue them and bring them in for cyberpsychological therapy** as described above. All cyber must be removed save for medically-necessary prostheses and the therapist must get their Alienation below their Wisdom attribute. If they can do so, the victim makes a Mental saving throw with a bonus equal to the therapist's best Heal or Talk skill level. On a success, they regain their reason. On a failure, they are hopelessly and permanently compromised.

## CHROME SYNDROMES

Very few cyber addicts leap directly to CIP. Most make progressively-larger accommodation to the demands of the cyber in their bodies, dealing with its quirks or demands in various maladaptive ways. These adaptations are referred to as "chrome syndromes", and have some common typologies.

**A PC can pick one or more chrome syndromes to accept any time they get new cyber.** The various syndromes are described in their most common forms, but the GM can allow a PC to pick any syndrome they can reasonably explain as being related to their new cyber; it may be that someone's new reflex aug feels so good to use that they become *Ravenous* for street racing, or their dermal armor leaves them feeling half-monstrous and *Distant* from normal humans.

**Each chrome syndrome increases the user's effective Alienation maximum by a certain number of points.** Thus, a PC who becomes *Distant* can add 3 points to their allowed maximum Alienation. The same syndrome cannot be picked twice.

The only way to get rid of a chrome syndrome is to uninstall the cyber that induced it and get therapy to eliminate any Alienation its installation caused. The user can never re-install that specific cyber system.

## ALIENATION CHECKS

When a user fights their chrome syndromes and tries to behave in ways contrary to them, they may be forced to check for Alienation. To do so, the user rolls 1d20; if the result is equal or less than their current Alienation, they gain one point. If this pushes them over their maximum allowed Alienation, they make a Mental save; on success, they pick a new chrome syndrome, and on a failure they immediately suffer CIP.



## CHROME SYNDROMES

These syndromes are merely some of the most common. Others may be created as the GM wishes.

**Brutal:** Your hardware isn't meant to be restrained. It hurts to leave the limiters on; the confirmation prompts keep blaring in your brain and it feels like you're suffocating when you don't let them work according to spec. Sub-optimal performance feels like something sharp digging in your head. *Effect: You cannot engage in non-lethal combat, though you don't necessarily need to coup de grace downed foes. Check for Alienation each round you attack someone with non-lethal intent.*

**Candid:** The processors feed you information so quickly and so smoothly that your meat brain barely has time to process it. If you try to slow it down, it hurts, so it's easier to just let it run. *Effect: You instinctively answer any question with at least one sentence of truthful reply. Check for Alienation if you try to remain silent or avert this instinct for a scene.*

**Cold:** The hormonal adjustments are fraying your ability to form emotional bonds with others. You intellectually may know they love you and you may have every reason to love them, but it's a distant abstraction to you. It's not a real feeling, like the hate, or lust, or longing that still sometimes sparks in you. You stick with your friends out of habit or rational calculation. *Effect: You are unable to feel love or affection for others. Lose your closest Contact.*

**Distant:** Everything's so much clearer with the augs. You can see what you need to do, to say, to be, while those around you wallow in weak, fleshly delusion. Dealing with them is so very tiresome. *Effect: Take a -1 penalty to all social skill checks.*

**Exultant:** The chrome is perfect. If it breaks, you can just fix it. If you break, you can just get more chrome. You can't be beaten, not for long, because the metal can do anything. *Effect: Your overconfidence causes an automatic, unavoidable skill failure on a natural skill roll of 12.*

**Fearless:** The combat augs are great for suppressing fear. Honestly, it feels so good that you just leave them on all the time. Being able to live your life without worry or anxiety is such a tremendous relief, even if it sometimes makes you overlook some things. *Effect: Your maximum HP is decreased by 20%, rounded down, because your survival instincts are dulled. If an NPC, your Morale is 12.*

**Hypervigilant:** Can't sleep. Wireless push updates will eat me. *Effect: Gain one permanent System Strain point due to persistent insomnia.*

**Murderous:** You were wired to kill, and you can't turn it off. The longer between kills, the more everything starts looking like a weapon, and ev-

| Chrome Syndromes                            | +Max Alienation |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Brutal</b> , unable to hold back         | +4              |
| <b>Candid</b> , unable to keep silent       | +3              |
| <b>Cold</b> , unable to feel love           | +4              |
| <b>Distant</b> , unable to tolerate people  | +3              |
| <b>Exultant</b> , unable to imagine failure | +3              |
| <b>Fearless</b> , unable to feel dread      | +4              |
| <b>Hypervigilant</b> , unable to rest       | +3              |
| <b>Murderous</b> , unable to stop killing   | +6              |
| <b>Ravenous</b> , unable to stop feeling    | +4              |
| <b>Savage</b> , unable to retreat           | +5              |
| <b>Secretive</b> , unable to admit it       | +3              |
| <b>Stressed</b> , unable to endure it       | +5              |

everyone starts looking like a throat to cut. When it gets really bad, the wires won't let you think of anything but your real purpose, what you made yourself to be. *Effect: Must personally kill at least one person a week, or check for Alienation for each day beyond without a murder.*

**Ravenous:** These senses are incredible; you're seeing, or hearing, or feeling things human meat was never meant to experience. You want more, you need more, and you'll do anything to get it. *Effect: Pick a sensory vice. Check for Alienation each time you resist an easy opportunity to indulge it. Pay \$100 per total permanent Alienation point per week in feeding it or check for Alienation.*

**Savage:** Your cyber is telling you to kill. It's constantly reminding you of active enemies or weak points on targets, and you have to keep rejecting confirmation prompts for killing blows. It's only letting you think about trajectories and kill counts, about threats and unfinished terminations. You can't think with a live enemy around. *Effect: You can't run from combat after you've suffered hit point damage in it. If you choose to flee, check for Alienation.*

**Secretive:** Your social protocols know best. They're telling you not to say that, warning you that you'll ruin everything if you admit it. You're supposed to say something better, something more appropriate, and the prompts keep screaming at you if you try to defy them. *Effect: You cannot entirely truthfully answer any question that doesn't relate to common knowledge or your wishes in a business transaction. If you do so, check for Alienation for each topic that's truthfully discussed in a scene.*

**Stressed:** The hardware is getting in the way of the wetware. The demands are aggravating an already weakened system, and it can't take the strain. *Effect: Your lowest attribute suffers a -1 modifier penalty, to a minimum of -3. If multiple attributes tie, pick one.*

# CHEAP CYBER

The pricing of cyber in *Cities Without Number* is meant to stratify things between the cheap, relatively minor cyber that's within reach of an ambitious gang member and the high-end professional chrome that will only be owned by the most dedicated operators and corp agents. The ongoing maintenance costs are meant to provoke the PCs into taking more missions, forcing them to take bigger risks and do bigger jobs to support their ever-advancing array of cyber systems.

While this fits CWN's default setting, it's not what every GM wants for their worlds. Some GMs will prefer to create a world where heavy cyber is within reach of even the lower classes, and every ganger worth their shiv is sporting at least some significant chrome. To accommodate those tastes, this section offers some optional rules and cyber systems to fit such worlds.

## CYBER PRICES AND MAINTENANCE

*All cyber and implant surgery listed in the main book has its price slashed to one-tenth its listed cost, and the Wired Edge's allowance is also reduced to one-tenth. Thus, a \$20,000 full-body fleshmod now only costs \$2,000, with implantation costs scaled down to match. A cranial jack costs a hundred bucks, and a skinmod tattoo can be stuck on for \$25 from a street cart. Secondhand cyber still exists at half the usual prices with all its usual drawbacks.*

*Maintenance costs are calculated based on the new price of the cyber, but the first \$1,000 of cyber maintenance costs in a month are ignored.* If you don't have much cyber to begin with, the monthly maintenance is trivial enough to be handled personally for no significant cost.

If you adopt this optional rule, low-level NPCs are going to have substantially more hardware as a matter of course, and PC System Strain maximums are going to matter a lot more. While PCs will gain power much more quickly, the NPCs they face will also be more heavily chromed, generally for a net loss for the PCs.

## MISSION REWARDS

*If you go with cheap cyber, at least halve your standard mission cash rewards.* If you leave them paying full rate, the PCs are going to get chromed to the gills before they're fourth level, while if you cut the rewards back too much the PCs are going to be unable to afford anything but more cyber. Be ready to drop it even lower if the PCs start to be too chrome-heavy.

If you want to gate access to the very best cyber behind something other than cash, you can make the best stuff very rare, requiring Contacts and specific missions to gain access to it. A mission may reward the PCs with the chance to buy that fancy set of *Enhanced Reflexes III* cyber rather than a monetary payoff.

## CHROMING NPCs

If you use cheap cyber, every remotely combat-oriented NPC is going to have at least one chunk of combat cyber. They may be rigged out in the street cyber described in this section or in several low-cost systems from the main book. If you use the enemy descriptions starting on page 185 of this book, use the next tier up for a given NPC's cyber. Thus, the "Low-End Private Security" NPC would have the cyber systems normally assigned to the "Basic Corp Guard".

## COMBAT CONSIDERATIONS

If you make high-end cyber cheap and ubiquitous, combat is going to get much more dangerous for the PCs. Usually, the PCs are the ones with the best cyber in a given situation; they're the elite operators who've wired themselves up, usually going up against normal people who have only minor levels of life-changing cybernetics installed. If cyber is cheap, this is no longer the case. Even if the PCs have better cyber than before, now every mook with a shotgun is sporting a gunlink, and there are a lot more mooks than there are PCs.

GMs need to be especially careful about any cyber that grants extra actions in combat. NPCs are almost always going to be triggering these systems and dumping their full capacity on the PCs; they've got no reason to hold back when they're not expecting additional encounters. An NPC with multiple actions is effectively the same as multiple NPCs during that single round, and it's not hard to swamp a party with them if the enemy catches them flat-footed.

## STREET CYBER

Included in this section are a selection of low-grade cyber systems appropriate for bolting into street thugs, gangers, and other impoverished combatants. These systems fit best into worlds with cheap cyber; they may not fit well into a conventional game, being too easily obtained for the benefits they grant. PCs can acquire them if they wish, but many of them have high System Strain costs and have the kind of side effects that only a desperate mook would accept.

As a rule, the benefits of this low-grade cyber do not stack with other cyber; you can't gain monstrous strength by doing *Muscle Grafts* onto *Hydraulic Limbs*, or stack *Skin Plating* on top of *Dermal Armor*.

## CHEAP STREET CYBER

| Ware            | Price   | Type    | Conc.   | SysStr | Effect                                |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Ballistic Arm   | \$1,500 | Limb    | Obvious | 2      | <i>Shotgun or heavy pistol in arm</i> |
| Career Mod      | \$500   | Body    | Touch   | 2      | <i>+1 to skill check 1/day</i>        |
| Fashion Form    | \$250   | Skin    | Sight   | 1      | <i>+1 social check, -1 to respect</i> |
| Hydraulic Limbs | \$2,000 | Limb    | Sight   | 3      | <i>Str 18 for non-combat ends</i>     |
| Hype Gland      | \$750   | Body    | Medical | 2      | <i>Combat drug implant</i>            |
| Muscle Graft    | \$750   | Limb    | Sight   | 2      | <i>+1 to Str-based hit/dmg/Shock</i>  |
| Nerve Booster   | \$1,000 | Nerve   | Sight   | 3      | <i>Bonus Main Action 1/day</i>        |
| Razornails      | \$500   | Limb    | Medical | 1      | <i>1d6+1, 1d6/x3 Tr., 1/15 Shock</i>  |
| Skin Plating    | \$500   | Skin    | Sight   | 1      | <i>+2 AC up to max 18</i>             |
| Springheels     | \$500   | Limb    | Sight   | 2      | <i>Jump 5m vertical, 10m horiz.</i>   |
| Synthocular     | \$250   | Sensory | Sight   | 1      | <i>Cut-rate single cybereye</i>       |

**Ballistic Arm:** A cybernetic arm with a crudely-integrated shotgun or heavy pistol. Works as a limb-gun with its +1 bonus to hit, but the weapon can't be replaced and can carry only its own integral magazine of ammunition. Reloading takes one Main Action.

**Career Mod:** These system suites of numerous minor tools, mods, and neural adjustments are sold to support a wide range of professions, such as mechanics, drivers, accountants, and courtesans. Once per day, add +1 to a skill check related to the chosen profession as an Instant action.

**Fashion Form:** Cheap, fast biomodding that sculpts a skin-deep beauty or a niche look suitable for professional performers or companions. Grants a +1 to most social skill checks, but the stigma applies a -1 penalty instead to any skill check reliant on being respected.

**Hydraulic Limbs:** Requiring skeletal reinforcement and the replacement of both arms, these cyberlimbs grant an effective Strength of 18 for all non-combat purposes and as a Main Action can break, smash, or crush any inanimate object a strong man with a sledgehammer could smash.

**Hype Gland:** A mentally-triggered chem dispenser that pours a cocktail of combat drugs into the user as an On Turn action. The drugs last for one scene, adding 2 System Strain and increasing the user's effective HP by 10 and granting a +2 bonus to hit rolls and damage, not including Shock. Any excess temporary hit points are lost at the end of the scene. Each year, a hype gland has a 5% chance of causing non-treatable cancer in a user.

**Muscle Graft:** Crude slabs of muscle and synthetic sinew are stitched onto the user's limbs and torso. They gain a +1 bonus to their Strength attribute modifier, to a maximum of +2, but suffer a -1 penalty to their Charisma modifier, to a minimum of -2.

**Nerve Booster:** Once per day, as a Move action, gain one System Strain and take another Main Action. Incompatible with any other extra-action cyber.

**Razornails:** Finger-mounted retractable blades that do 1d6+1 damage with 1d6/x3 Trauma Die and 1/15 Shock. They grant +1 to hit with them, using Punch or Stab.

**Skin Plating:** Grants +2 Ranged/Melee AC to a maximum of 18. It stacks with armor but not with cyber. It applies a -1 penalty to all Dex skill checks.

**Springheels:** Compressive pistons are added to a pair of economy-class cyberlegs. As a Move action, the user can gain one System Strain to leap up to 5 meters vertically or 10 meters horizontally, the jump counting as a *Fighting Withdrawal* for combat purposes. The user ignores falling damage of less than 20 meters. While powerful, the legs are somewhat clumsy, and apply a -1 penalty to all skill checks related to agile leg movement.

**Synthocular:** A crudely obvious cybernetic eye replacement, usually sold in single units to those who can't afford a pair of tailored cybereyes. Like cybereyes, they come with integral flash protection and halve further eye implant costs. Synthocular users take -2 to all ranged attack rolls.



# MAGIC IN THE CITY

Some GMs prefer to play in settings where magic is mingled with circuitry, and where some people have the power to wield sorcery as well as shotguns. The rules in this section provide a framework for such PCs and the arcane enemies they might face.

For GMs playing in a campaign setting where magic already has an explanation and a place in it, it's easy enough to just use what already exists. The rules that follow might need a few tweaks to fit your chosen setting's magic, but it can often be just as easy to make the setting's magic work the way it's given in this book. Unless some part of the campaign absolutely hinges on magic behaving in a particular way, it's often not worth the effort to convert more than you need to convert.

## THE BOSTON DELETION AND THE BLEED

When Boston was scooped out of existence on June 7th, 2041, more was created than just the New Harbor. Throughout the world, out of the clear sight of humanity, an inexplicable influx of horrific monsters and impossible artifacts started to populate the shadows. In places distant from human habitations or deep beneath the bustling streets of human cities, things of a different kind awoke and stirred.

This "Bleed" was a worldwide phenomenon, and it appears to be ongoing to this day. Almost every day, some remote location finds itself infested with terrible monsters or plagued with an outbreak of alien hostiles. The only apparent check on this effect is a high density of human population, as no actively-inhabited structure has been known to be infested since the Bleed began. The sewers and underways beneath cities are a different matter, however, and abandoned badland towns or forsaken slum tenements can become dangerous nests without warning. Such outbreaks are rare, but common enough to be feared.

Some of these "Intruders" bore shapes not unlike humanity. Others were tentacled abominations, or scaled horrors, or things that defied biological logic entirely. A few even seemed to be cybernetic in nature, though their implants of glyphed bronze and hepatizon wire owed nothing to conventional cybertech. Many had only bestial intellects, but some of them, both humanoid and otherwise, appeared to have minds not unlike human beings.

Yet the great majority of these Intruders were uniformly hostile. The least violent ones were cunning and treacherous, quick to kill when a convenient opportunity arose. The more savage were all but uncontrollable, shying back only from obviously superior forces and indulging in murder, torment, and cannibalism when they could. Only a fraction of these alien species showed any interest in dealing with humanity, and that only at arm's length.

The work of establishing communication was slow. Most of the Intruders had no interest in talking, and the few neutrals avoided humanity whenever possible. It was only after extensive corporate interrogation of numerous captured Intruders and the analysis of their most common language that some vague picture was painted of their origins.

## THE OTHER SIDE AND MAGIC

According to these Intruders, the invaders originally inhabited a horrific world where human beings were either slaves or cattle to alien lords from beyond the sky. While none of these Intruders claimed to be aliens themselves, many of them were bio-engineered servitor races designed to hunt wayward humans or serve ineffable alien purposes. How they arrived in this world was unclear to them; as far as they knew, they had simply been translated over in a flicker of unexplained sorcery, scooped up from locations thousands of kilometers apart to be dumped in random places in this world. The fact that it was evidently dominated by humanity was horrifying to most of the intelligent Intruders, and many spoke of taking steps to correct that.

Along with the Intruders, certain occult objects and arcane devices were also caught up in the Bleed, including eldritch texts and grimoires that promised great power to those who mastered their arts. Further research showed that most of the techniques and rituals described in the books were entirely useless, dependent as they were on the energies of the Other Side, but just enough of the foreign forces bled through to make some of the most basic effects and simplest spells functional. The initial scholars who studied these texts became the founding sorcerers and spirit-summoners of the modern world, their secrets spread widely by other grimoires found in the wreckage of Intruder lairs.

## MAGIC IN THE PRESENT DAY

Currently, the existence of the Intruders, magic, and spellcraft are commonly accepted by the public, even if wild misunderstandings about them are common among ordinary people. Intruder attacks are rare, but regular enough that standing response forces are maintained and operator teams are regularly hired to handle incursions. Governments and corps alike are eager to lay their hands on new, unknown artifacts.

There are even a few Intruders in human society, though their general resemblance to ordinary humans makes them difficult to distinguish from heavily-modded normals. Most prefer it that way. The regular atrocities committed by human-hostile Intruders has made all their myriad kinds intensely unwelcome among their new hosts, while the few willing to associate with humans are generally viewed as traitors by their own kind.

# MAGES AND SPELLCASTING

In campaigns that involve magic it's common for PCs to want to play a spell-slinging operator with a pistol in one hand and fell sorcery in the other. While there are limits even to what the arcane arts can accomplish, this section of the rules will provide a means to these eldritch ends.

## THE SPELLCASTER EDGE

All would-be Mages must take the *Spellcaster Edge* at first level. The education needed to become a mage is usually too intense to pick up later in an operator's career, and in many settings a certain natural talent is also required to become a sorcerer.

Taking the *Spellcaster Edge* grants Cast as a bonus skill and allows the PC to pick four spells from the following list as starting incantations.

## THE CAST SKILL

The **Cast** skill reflects a caster's talent at spellcasting and their intellectual mastery of the complex formulas, rituals, and incantations necessary to use their spells. Anyone can learn it as a strictly intellectual exercise, but only those with the *Spellcaster Edge* can actually use it to cast spells.

## MAGE EFFORT

Spellcasting is powered by a limited resource called **Mage Effort**. A caster's maximum Mage Effort is equal to the higher of their Intelligence or Wisdom modifiers plus their Cast skill level, to a minimum of 1 point.

Mage Effort refreshes completely each morning, assuming the caster has gotten eight uninterrupted hours of reasonably comfortable sleep. Casters who are starved, freezing, thirsting, sick, or otherwise physically distracted cannot refresh Mage Effort.

Mage Effort is "Committed" when used to cast spells. There are three different kinds of Commitment for Effort.

**Commitment for the day** means the Effort returns only the next morning. These spells are powerful, and make persistent demands on the caster's energy.

**Commitment for the scene** means the Effort returns at the end of the scene. This may be in fifteen minutes under ordinary circumstances, or at the end of each fight or specific activity when operating under mission time.

**Commitment for the duration** means that the Effort can be reclaimed whenever the caster wishes as an Instant action, but whatever power it fueled ends as soon as the Effort is returned.

Each spell indicates how long Effort must be Committed for when the mage casts it.

## MAGES AND CYBERWARE

Mages are notoriously inapt with cybernetic augmentation. The more metal that is integrated with their body, the harder it is for them to channel their arcane powers. Theorists have provided a number of hypotheses for the mechanism behind this limit, but the real reason remains largely a mystery.

For each cybernetic system implanted in a mage, their Mage Effort maximum decreases by the System Strain of the implant, to a minimum of one point even for trivial cosmetic mods. Thus, a mage who implanted hardware that had System Strain costs of 2, 0, and 0.5 would lose four points of maximum Mage Effort. This Effort can be restored by removing the cyberware.

This magical allergy can be a serious problem if the mage is forced to use prosthetic cyber to compensate for some major injury. Wealthy mages prefer to have donor-cloned organs and limbs used to repair such damage. Less fortunate casters can find back-alley medical enchanters to sorcel up a magical implant or prosthesis that serves the same function at the same cost and maintenance requirements as the prosthetic cyber or cyberlimb, but with 2 permanent System Strain gained for each such makeshift enchantment.

Efforts to generalize these *de minimis* prostheses into "magic cyberware" have had results that range from the useless to the catastrophically dangerous. Even so, some particularly reckless researchers continue to pursue the goal.

## LEARNING AND PREPARING SPELLS

Mages must learn their spells from a cooperative tutor or a very expensive enchanted grimoire capable of imparting the multidimensional arcane construct of the spell. Learning a spell requires one week of practice with a grimoire or tutor.

Tutors generally charge \$5,000 to teach a spell, though special favors can cut that price substantially. Grimoires can only be obtained through Contacts, and start at \$10,000 for the most common spells.

Once a spell is learned, it must be prepared for casting. A mage can prepare a number of spells equal to half their level, rounded up, plus their Cast skill. Thus, a first level PC with Cast-1 skill could prepare two different spells. A tenth level master with Cast-4 could have nine on hand at any one time. Prepared spells can be changed when Effort is refreshed in the morning. No special grimoires or spellbooks are required to change prepared spells; just having learned the spell is sufficient.







## CASTING SPELLS

To cast a spell, a Mage must have at least one hand free and the ability to speak. Spells can be cast even while wearing heavy armor or being partially restrained so long as one arm is free and the caster is not being severely jostled or disturbed.

Mages who have suffered hit point damage, grappling, or other severe distractions in a round cannot cast spells that round. If the mage is struck mid-casting by someone who held their action to do so, the spell is lost and the Effort required is wasted.

Mages can cast only the spells they have prepared, but may do so as often as the spell or their Effort allows them to.

The actual spellcasting is a Main Action. The caster must speak at a conversational volume and gesture plainly with one hand. Spells that have a physical effect on the world project beams, glows, or other signs that clearly indicate the mage who cast the spell. Spells that have only mental effects, such as *Stun* or *Stunwave*, have no such obvious tracers. Most professionals in a magical cyberpunk world will know enough about spellcasting to recognize it if the caster is being observed.

Unless specified otherwise, spells only require one point of Effort to be Committed in order to trigger them.

## OVERCASTING

There are times when a sufficiently desperate caster must push their magical energies past the point of safe usage in order to invoke a needed spell. In such cases, a reckless mage can **overcast**, drawing more Mage Effort from the ether in exchange for the risk of serious harm.

A mage declares overcasting as an On Turn action. The next spell they cast that same round has no Effort cost, but after the spell is cast the mage then rolls on the overcasting table below, adding their Cast skill and Constitution modifier to the die, and subtracting 2 if the spell requires Committing Effort for the day. Spells with a Commit-for-duration Effort cost last for one scene when overcast.

If the System Strain inflicted by overcasting would put the mage above their maximum, they fall unconscious for an hour before waking up with 1 hit point.

### OVERCASTING RESULTS

| 1d20  | Consequence                                                        |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-    | Instant and unavoidable death                                      |
| 2-4   | Mortally wounded and at zero HP                                    |
| 5-8   | Gain 4 System Strain, fall unconscious for one minute              |
| 9-15  | Gain 2 System Strain, stunned and unable to act for the next round |
| 16-19 | Gain 1 System Strain, lose your next round's Main Action           |
| 20+   | Gain 1 System Strain                                               |



## SPELLS

With the uneven global development of magic and the natural jealousy of sorcerers eager to preserve their secrets, there are relatively few “universally known” spells. Even so, the incantations listed here are fairly common in the magical community, and a suitable Contact can produce a tutor willing to teach them.

### TARGETS AND PER LEVEL EFFECTS

Some spells specify a “visible target”. Unless noted otherwise, this constitutes a point or creature within 200 meters that the caster can clearly identify. A target hiding behind a door would not be a suitable target, but one ducked behind a drape or other light concealment could be targeted if their location was known.

Cybernetic or gear-augmented sight does not help when determining visibility; only natural, normal human senses can channel arcane energies.

Where effects are “per level”, they always refer to the caster’s character level or hit dice, with a maximum of 10 levels or hit dice of effect.

Unless specified otherwise, spells do not roll a Trauma Die and cannot inflict Traumatic Hits, even if they do lethal damage.

### SPELL LIST

**Arson:** Target a visible creature or flammable object.

If a creature, roll a Shoot attack to hit it, adding your Cast skill as a bonus to the hit roll. If the spell hits, the target is wreathed in flames, suffering 1d8 fire damage per level. Flammable objects continue to burn normally. A target can be hit by *Arson* only once per scene.

**Blast:** A single visible target, whether a creature or object, takes 1d6 damage per level in concussive impact. Creatures can make a Physical save for half damage. Each use of this spell after the first in a scene adds one System Strain to the caster.

**Blastwave:** Select a visible target, whether creature or object; it and everything within five meters of it takes 1d6 damage per level in concussive impact. Creatures can make a Physical save to halve the damage. Each time you cast this spell, gain one System Strain, and it cannot be used more than once per scene unless you overcast it.

**Bless:** Target a visible creature. They gain a +1 bonus to all hit rolls and damage, including Shock, for one round per caster level. Only one *Bless* effect can be on a target at once.

**Cleanse Toxin:** You touch an ally who has been poisoned; the effects of the poison immediately end, though the damage it’s already done is not cured.

**Cloak:** Target up to one visible creature per two caster levels, rounded up. The creature becomes nearly transparent for the rest of the scene, gaining a +2 bonus on all Sneak checks and giving most creatures no chance to spot them at all unless they are specifically vigilant for intruders or the cloaked target gets within five meters of them. The effect ends instantly if the cloaked creature moves quickly, such as by running, fighting, or casting.

**Combat Precognition:** A single visible target is given a brief glimpse of the future while in combat, the effect lasting the rest of the scene. This precognition is enough to allow them to reroll a missed hit roll or low damage roll as an Instant action, taking the better of the two rolls. A roll may be rerolled only once, and after each use of the power the target gains System Strain equal to the number of times they’ve used it that same day.

**Compulsion:** Target a visible intelligent creature and give them a one-sentence telepathic command that isn’t extremely contrary to their wishes. They must make a Mental save or spend their next round’s actions performing your command to the best of their ability, unaware of your mental influence. If used against a target that is not in combat or feeling threatened, they might continue to obey for up to a scene if not alarmed. Victims will not realize they have been mentally attacked unless they make their saving throw. Once a save is made, a creature is immune to *Compulsion* for the rest of the scene.

**Curse:** Target a visible creature. They suffer a -1 penalty to all hit rolls and damage, including Shock, for one round per caster level. They can make a Mental save at the end of each round to throw off the effect. This penalty increases to -2 at level 5, and -3 at level 9. Only one *Curse* can be active on a creature at once.

**Detect Target:** When preparing this spell, choose a type of target from this list: a species of living creature, a specific person you’ve met, a general class of object, intelligent creatures that currently mean to physically harm you, or enchanted objects. When cast, for the rest of the scene you can take a Move action to sense the selected target within five meters per level, gaining a basic sense of their presence and location. You may prepare this spell more than once for different targets.



## COMMONLY KNOWN SPELLS

| Spell                        | Effort    | Duration      | Effect                                                      |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Arson</b>                 | Day       | Instant       | Shoot flames at a target for 1d8 dmg/level on a hit         |
| <b>Blast</b>                 | Day       | Instant       | Physically smite a target for 1d6 dmg/level, save for half  |
| <b>Blastwave</b>             | Day       | Instant       | As Blast, with a 5-meter area of effect                     |
| <b>Bless</b>                 | Scene     | Scene         | Grant +1 hit/damage/Shock to an ally for the scene          |
| <b>Cleanse Toxin</b>         | Day       | Instant       | Cure poison on a touched target                             |
| <b>Cloak</b>                 | Day       | Scene         | 1 creature/2 caster levels becomes near-transparent         |
| <b>Combat Precognition</b>   | Day       | Scene         | Grant an ally hit roll rerolls at the cost of System Strain |
| <b>Compulsion</b>            | Scene     | Scene         | Force one round of a not-hateful compulsion on a target     |
| <b>Curse</b>                 | Scene     | 1 round/level | Apply a scaling hit/damage/Shock penalty to a foe           |
| <b>Detect Target</b>         | Scene     | Scene         | Prep this for a type of target; detect it in 5 m/level area |
| <b>Dispel</b>                | Day       | Instant       | Dispel an ongoing magical spell effect                      |
| <b>Disrupt</b>               | Day       | Instant       | Add 1d8 dmg/level to a successful Punch attack              |
| <b>Emotion</b>               | Scene/Day | Scene         | Imbue a target with a desired intense emotion               |
| <b>Far Senses</b>            | Day       | Concentration | Scry on an area within 10 m/level                           |
| <b>Glide</b>                 | Scene     | Instant       | Grant level+3 targets the ability to glide safely           |
| <b>Haste</b>                 | Day       | Scene         | Grant an ally extra actions at the cost of System Strain    |
| <b>Heal Injury</b>           | Day       | Instant       | Heal 1d6 dmg/3 levels + Heal skill; target gains Sys. Str.  |
| <b>Illumination</b>          | None      | Scene         | Make an object glow brightly in a 10m radius                |
| <b>Mirage</b>                | Scene     | Scene         | Conjure an intangible audio-visual illusion in an area      |
| <b>Muffle</b>                | Scene     | Scene         | Target up to a 10m-radius area; sound doesn't travel out    |
| <b>Paralysis</b>             | Day       | Scene         | Roll 1d8/level; if greater than target HP, save or freeze   |
| <b>Psychic Interrogation</b> | Day       | Instant       | Get a short telepathic answer from a helpless target        |
| <b>Slow</b>                  | Day       | 1 round/level | Target either gives up their Main Action or takes damage    |
| <b>Soul Link</b>             | Scene     | Scene         | Telepathic link with a target; share a skill once during it |
| <b>Stun</b>                  | Scene/Day | Instant       | Do 1d6/level psychic damage to a target; save to lessen     |
| <b>Stunwave</b>              | Day       | Instant       | As Stun, but with a 5-meter radius of effect                |
| <b>Triage</b>                | Scene/Day | Instant       | Stabilize a Mortally Wounded ally                           |

**Dispel:** Target a visible spell effect or creature. Any spell effects on the creature or targeted area are immediately ended. If the original caster had an equal or higher Cast skill, the dispeller must succeed in an opposed Int/Cast spell check against them to dispel their magic. This spell only functions against spell effects, and not standing magical effects created by items or other methods.

**Disrupt:** The next time you touch a creature or object, inflict normal unarmed damage plus 1d8 per level. Creatures can make a Physical save to negate this bonus damage. A Punch attack is necessary to touch a target in combat, but the mage may add their Cast skill to the hit roll. Only one charge of this spell may be active at once, and it dissipates if not used by the end of the scene.

**Emotion:** Target a visible creature, choose an emotion, and optionally pick a target or subject for that emotion. The victim must make a Mental save or immediately feel that emotion for the rest of the scene, optionally directed toward that target. This emotion is strong enough to get them to act to the limit of their normal character and rationality. In combat, a powerful fear may be enough to force a Morale check. If this spell is cast with Effort for the day instead of the scene, the target and all creatures within five meters must save or be affected, all sharing an emotion and target.

**Far Senses:** Pick a location within ten meters per character level. Unless the area is shielded against magical intrusion, your unaided human senses focus on the location as if you were standing there. You maintain this clairvoyance as long as you do nothing but concentrate, up to a scene in duration.

**Glide:** Target a number of visible creatures equal to your character level plus three. For the rest of the scene, these creatures are immune to falling damage. When leaping from a height, they can land at any point within 5 meters for each meter of height they have, gliding at a rate of 40 meters per round.

**Haste:** Target a visible ally. For the next 1d4+1 rounds, once per round, as an On Turn action, they can perform an extra Main Action. This bonus action cannot involve spellcasting, summoning, or activating magical items. Using this bonus action adds 0 System Strain to the user for the first use per day, 1 for the second that same day, 2 for the third, and so forth.

**Heal Injury:** You touch an ally, curing 1d6 damage per three caster levels, rounded up, plus your Heal skill. This healing adds one System Strain to the target but removes any Frailty they may be suffering. It cannot repair Major Injuries, but can stabilize those downed by them.

**Illumination:** Such a minor spell that it doesn't even require Effort, this incantation causes a touched object to glow as you wish, illuminating up to 10 meters around it for up to an hour. Only one *Illumination* can be active at a time.

**Mirage:** Pick a visible target location. You can create a visual and audible illusion within ten meters of that location. This illusion cannot turn objects invisible, but can conceal them behind opaque phantasms. The illusion can involve motion and activity, but once programmed, it cannot be changed, nor can it move out of the target radius. The illusion is intangible and cannot inflict damage, and those aware of its falsity can see through it with a successful Mental save taken as a Main Action. Only one *Mirage* can be summoned at a time.

**Muffle:** Pick a visible target location and a radius of up to ten meters. For the rest of the scene, no sound made within this zone will be audible outside the zone.

**Paralysis:** Target a visible creature and roll 1d8 per level. If the total is greater than the target's current hit points, they must make a Mental save or become paralyzed and helpless for the rest of the scene. On a successful save, they still lose their next Main Action. The spell can target a given creature only once per scene.

**Psychic Interrogation:** Target a visible intelligent creature that is cooperative or restrained. Ask them one question of no more than two sentences. They may make a Mental save; on a success, they give you three telepathic sentences of their choice. On a failure, those three sentences are a truthful and candid answer to your question. The target is then immune to this spell for a week. A target's saving throw result is not obvious to you.

**Slow:** Target a visible creature. For one round per level thereafter, each round they must either lose their Main Action or take 1d6 psychic damage per two caster levels, rounded up, with a Mental save for half damage. This damage can leave them unconscious, but not kill them. At the end of each of their rounds, they can make a Mental save to end the spell early. A creature can be affected by *Slow* only once per scene.

**Soul Link:** You connect your mind to that of a willing visible intelligent target. For the rest of the scene, you can communicate telepathically no matter the distance between you, and each know each other's location and physical status at all times. Once during the spell, the two of you may agree to share a skill, both using it at the same level for one round per caster level. Only one Soul Link can be active at a time.

**Stun:** A single visible creature takes 1d6 damage per level in psychic shock, with a Mental save to take only one point of damage per level instead. This damage can strike a creature unconscious, but it awakens ten minutes later with one hit point. A creature targeted by this spell is thereafter immune to it and *Stunwave* for the rest of the scene. Using this spell more than once a scene requires committing Effort for the day instead of the scene.

**Stunwave:** Target a visible point; every living target within five meters takes 1d6 damage per level in psychic shock, with a Mental save to take only one point of damage per level instead. This damage can strike a creature unconscious, but it awakes ten minutes later with one hit point. A creature targeted by this spell is thereafter immune to it and *Stun* for the rest of the scene. This spell cannot be used more than once per scene unless you overcast it.

**Triage:** You touch an adjacent living creature that is Mortally Wounded, stabilizing them immediately. This process adds one System Strain to the target, though you can avoid this by Committing Effort for the day when casting it instead of for the scene.



# SUMMONERS AND SPIRIT CALLING

Just as some cyberpunk worlds include spell-slinging sorcerers, some also have the presence of spirits and summoned entities. GMs who want to run a setting involving such invocations can use the rules in this section, flavoring matters in a way that matches their campaign background.

## THE SUMMONER EDGE

Those who would beckon the spirits must take the *Summoner Edge* at first level. Some insist that a spirit-caller must be born to their role, while others maintain that enough education can grant even the least adept shaman their powers. Either way, the Edge is too demanding to be taken later on in a PC's career. Taking the *Summoner Edge* grants *Summon* as a bonus skill.

## THE SUMMON SKILL

The *Summon* skill reflects the summoner's knowledge of spiritual entities and the rigors of their training in channeling the otherworldly energies of the spirits. Anyone can learn it as a purely intellectual study, but only those with the *Summoner Edge* can actually use it to beckon or banish spirits.

## SUMMONER EFFORT

Much as mages have Mage Effort, summoners have Summoner Effort, and someone who has both the *Spellcaster Edge* and the *Summoner Edge* has both pools. Summoner Effort is equal to the higher of their Constitution or Charisma modifiers plus their *Summon* skill level, to a minimum of 1 point.

Summoner Effort refreshes completely each morning in the same way as Mage Effort, but Effort bound up in summoned spirits cannot be reclaimed until the morning after the spirits are dispelled. Those that are merely dismissed still act as a drain on the summoner's energies. In all other regards, Summoner Effort works the same way as Mage Effort. As usual, the pools cannot be mixed; a spellcaster who has exhausted their Mage Effort can't borrow from their Summoner Effort to hurl one more spell.

## SUMMONERS AND CYBERWARE

Summoners suffer the same consequences for getting cyberware that mages endure. The intrusion of alien metal into their flesh disturbs the flow of magical energy, and the spirits grow less and less inclined to pay heed to their commands. Each cyber system implanted in the summoner reduces their maximum Summoner Effort by the cyber's System Strain value, to a minimum of one point per system. This Effort cannot be regained until the cyber is removed.

A summoner who suffers a Major Injury can take advantage of the same makeshift medical enchantments that a mage can, spending the same amount as they'd spend on prosthetic cyber and gaining 2 permanent System Strain for each such system.

## CALLING AND DISMISSING SPIRITS

A ritually summoned spirit is in attendance on its summoner, but it does not always have to be immediately present. As a Main Action, the summoner can *dismiss* a spirit they command within 30 meters, causing it to vanish. As another Main Action, the summoner can *call* it, causing the vanished spirit to reappear within 5 meters, provided there is no obstacle between them and the summoner too big for the spirit to fit through. Dismissed spirits leave behind any objects they were carrying or wearing. Time passes normally for dismissed spirits, so persistent effects on them continue to tick over. Spirits beckoned with immediate summoning cannot be called or dismissed, and remain present until they are destroyed or dispelled.

## DESTROYING AND BANISHING SPIRITS

Spirits are destroyed by reducing their hit points to zero, whereupon they immediately vanish. A specific destroyed spirit with the *Namebearer* power can be summoned again by the summoner, but nameless spirits cannot be specifically beckoned back once destroyed. A visible spirit within thirty meters may also be dispelled by their summoner as a Main Action, sending them back from whence they came and allowing any Effort invested in their summoning to be restored the following morning.

A summoner may also *banish* spirits offensively, even those they did not summon. Each banishment attempt requires a Main Action and that they Commit Summoner Effort for the day and target a visible spirit within 30 meters. They then make an opposed Cha/Summon skill check against the spirit's summoner, or against the spirit's skill bonus +2 if the spirit is uncontrolled. On a success, they inflict 1d8 damage per Summon skill level to the spirit.

## SUMMONING SPIRITS

A summoner has two ways to call up the spirits that would serve them. They can perform a slow, careful **ritual summoning** to beckon up their servants with minimal magical effort, or they can rely on a quick **immediate summoning** to call up exactly the minion they need at the moment.

### RITUAL SUMMONING

1. **Spend two hours in a complex ritual.** No special magical components or facilities are required for this rite, but you cannot be disturbed during it or it will fail.
2. **Choose a nature for your summons.** Pick a single noun describing the basic type of spirit you're calling: Fire, Water, Streets, Trees, Night, or some other term. All the powers you choose for the spirit must be somehow related to its nature. The spirit's skill bonus applies to all skill checks pertinent to its nature, which may be very few of them for the more esoteric concepts.
3. **Choose a physical or spirit form for your summons.** Pick either a *Physical Form* or *Spirit Form* to manifest your spirit. At first level, you can only pick *Physical Form I* or *Spirit Form I*. At 5th level you can pick the second level of those forms, and at 9th, you can choose the third level. You can't have more total hit dice of spirits summoned at once than your character level.
4. **Choose an appearance for your summons.** Spirits can appear in any shape no larger than a rabbit and no smaller than a draft horse, but they appear unnatural without a *Mortal Disguise*.
5. **Choose powers for your summons.** You can freely pick as many powers as you wish, each one adding one point of cost to the spirit. Some powers require a minimum character level to add them.
6. **Commit Effort to summon the spirit.** You must Commit Summoner Effort for the day equal to the spirit's cost minus one. This cost is also decreased by your Summon skill. No spirit can cost less than one point of Effort to summon. You cannot recover this Effort until the morning after the spirit is dispelled or destroyed.
7. **The spirit will manifest at the end of the ritual** and will obediently serve you until it is destroyed or dispelled. It may be dismissed or called freely while it remains summoned. Spirits are dispelled instantly if the summoner dies.

### IMMEDIATE SUMMONING

1. **Spend a Main Action to quickly call a spirit.** This calling cannot be disrupted by physical harm the way spellcasting can be disrupted.
2. **Choose a nature for your summons.** Pick a single noun describing the basic type of spirit you're calling: Fire, Water, Streets, Trees, Night, or some other term. All the powers you choose for the spirit must be somehow related to its nature. The spirit's skill bonus applies to all skill checks pertinent to its nature, which may be very few of them for the more esoteric concepts.
3. **Choose a physical or spirit form for your summons.** Pick either a *Physical Form* or *Spirit Form* to manifest your spirit. At first level, you can only pick *Physical Form I* or *Spirit Form I*. At 5th level you can pick the second level of those forms, and at 9th, you can choose the third level. You can't have more total hit dice of spirits summoned at once than your character level.
4. **Choose an appearance for your summons.** Spirits can appear in any shape no larger than a rabbit and no smaller than a draft horse, but unless the *Mortal Disguise* power is taken they will always look uncanny and unnatural.
5. **Choose powers for your summons.** You can freely pick as many powers as you wish, each one adding one point of cost to the spirit. Some powers require that you have a minimum character level to select them.
6. **Commit Effort to summon the spirit.** You must Commit Summoner Effort for the day equal to the spirit's cost. This cost is also decreased by your Summon skill. No spirit can cost less than one point of Effort to summon, and the total summoning cost increases by 1 Effort point for each successive immediate summons within the same scene.
7. **The spirit instantly appears within 5 meters of the summoner,** and will serve them for up to an hour before vanishing. The spirit begins taking actions on the next round after being summoned, acting on its summoner's initiative. Spirits summoned this way cannot be called or dismissed; they always remain present in this world until they are destroyed or dispelled. Spirits are dispelled instantly if the summoner dies.

## SPIRIT ABILITIES AND LIMITS

Every summoned spirit shares a few basic qualities. Spirits can:

- Think with human intelligence and carry out verbal orders reasonably and intelligently.
- Exist without food, water, or air, and resist all mundane toxins, diseases, and radiation.
- Speak, read, and write any languages known to their summoner.
- Gain their skill bonus when performing skill checks related to their nature.
- Ignore Morale checks, being solely subject to their summoner's commands within the limits of their nature.

Along with these abilities, there are some things that spirits simply can't do.

- Use weapons or armor, as spirits can use only such things as are part of their own being.
- Operate human technology beyond pushing a single button. They understand the uses of such devices, but simply cannot conceive of using them personally.
- Attack or directly harm humans, creatures, or other spirits without the *Violent Will* power. Only spirits in physical form can take this power.
- Act directly contrary to their nature or accept a suicidal order without attempting to resist it.

Some of these limits can be at least partially circumvented with the right spirit powers.

### PHYSICAL AND SPIRIT FORMS

Every spirit must be summoned with a manifestation, either a physical or spiritual one. These manifestations do not count as a power when it comes to calculating a spirit's cost.

**Physical forms** must be no smaller than a rabbit but not larger than a draft horse. They can be humanoid, but invariably appear uncanny and unnatural. They have ordinary human degrees of strength, speed, and other physical qualities when those are relevant.

**Spirit forms** must be of the same size, but are visible, intangible and unable to directly affect the mundane world except through their powers. They cannot pass through living creatures large enough to see, as their spiritual energies are impermeable. They also cannot pass through walls, closed doors, barriers, or the earth, as all these things have a psychic significance of obstruction that ordinary inanimate matter does not. They *can* pass through liquids. They can be harmed by spells, magic weapons, fire, other immaterial energies, and the psychic force of unarmed attacks, not including cyberclaws or other inanimate add-ons.

### COMMANDING SPIRITS

Spirits will intelligently obey their summoner's verbal commands to the limit of their abilities under most cases. In combat or other time-sensitive situations, spirits act independently on the same initiative as their summoner. They'll carry out orders intelligently, albeit their actions are usually colored by the spirit's own nature. Provided their master does not demand anything too contrary to their nature or their interests, a spirit can be relied upon to be an incorruptible servant.

Some wizards just can't help but push it, though. If a spirit is ordered to do something opposed or repugnant to its nature or is commanded to do something that it thinks certain to end in its destruction, it will resist the order. The summoner can either accept its refusal or try to force it into obedience.

**Compelling a spirit requires that the summoner Commit Effort for the scene and make a successful Cha/Summon skill check** at a difficulty ranging from 8, for a deeply distasteful command, to 11, for a suicidal order, to 13, for an act that is directly contrary to the spirit's basic nature. On a success, the spirit grudgingly obeys.

On a failure, the spirit breaks free from the summoner's control. The good news is that the Effort required to summon it can now be recovered the following morning. The bad news is that the spirit now is entirely outside the command of the summoner, and is likely very angry with them. Some spirits will flee, while others may attack or bedevil the summoner. These uncontrolled spirits can persist for as long as they can continue to find some source of sympathetic energy to fuel them, and over time they can grow to be quite dangerously powerful. Most uncontrolled spirits fail to find such a source and fade away in a few days, but "most" is small comfort when that renegade fire spirit gets into the aluminum foundry or the spirit of battle finds a gang war to join.

Intentionally freeing a spirit is theoretically possible, but highly dangerous to the summoner. Something about the fundamental rejection of the spirit's service tends to pervert or corrupt the spirit, usually resulting in a malicious, dangerous parody of the former entity's personality. Not only that, but persistent, intentional severing of spiritual bonds is thought to have the potential to inflict permanent damage on the summoner's magical abilities. As such, only the most desperate, reckless summoners would consider permanently unleashing their servants on the world. This does not mean that it is never done, of course.



| Manifestations    | HD | HP | AC  | Trauma<br>Target | Atk. | Dmg.   | Shock   | Move | Skill | Save | Min.<br>Level |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|------------------|------|--------|---------|------|-------|------|---------------|
| Physical Form I   | 1  | 5  | 12  | 6                | +2@  | 1d10   | None    | 10m  | +0    | 15+  | 1             |
| Physical Form II  | 4  | 20 | 15  | 6                | +5@  | 1d10+2 | 2/AC 15 | 10m  | +1    | 13+  | 5             |
| Physical Form III | 8  | 40 | 18  | 6                | +8@  | 1d10+4 | 4/AC 15 | 10m  | +2    | 11+  | 9             |
| Spirit Form I     | 1  | 5  | 10* | 6                | None | None   | None    | 10m  | +1    | 15+  | 1             |
| Spirit Form II    | 3  | 15 | 13* | 6                | None | None   | None    | 15m  | +1    | 14+  | 5             |
| Spirit Form III   | 5  | 25 | 15* | 6                | None | None   | None    | 20m  | +2    | 13+  | 9             |

\*: Spirit Forms can only be harmed by unarmed attacks, spells, magical weapons, fire, or other energies

@: Only Physical Forms with Violent Will can fight. Spirit Forms cannot directly harm creatures.

### COMMON SPIRIT POWERS

| Power               | Min. Level | Effect                                                                         |
|---------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Airy Steps          | 3          | The spirit can fly at its normal Move rate. Physical spirits can carry a load. |
| Artifice-Wise       | 1          | The spirit can use common modern technology, but not weapons or armor.         |
| Aura of Destruction | 5          | Gain a damage bonus of half its hit dice and damage melee attackers            |
| Curse               | 1          | Target a foe with -1 skill checks and -2 hit/damage. Increases with levels.    |
| Ensnare             | 1          | Make a target unable to move from their location until freed                   |
| Favor               | 1          | Target an ally with a bonus to checks or combat rolls for a particular end     |
| Feral Pact          | 1          | Speak with and command animals of the same type as the animal-spirit           |
| Finned Swiftess     | 1          | Swim at twice the spirit's usual Move rate                                     |
| Flesh of Clay       | 1          | The spirit cannot be affected by Traumatic Hits.                               |
| Ghostly Presence    | 5          | The spirit is invisible until it takes a violent action or draws attention.    |
| Hideous Talons      | 3          | Gain a bonus to the combat statistics granted by Violent Will.                 |
| Iron Eidolon        | 10         | A physical form is immune to non-magic weapons, but not unarmed hits.          |
| Merciful Hands      | 1          | Accept damage to the spirit in order to heal damage to a wounded ally.         |
| Mighty Form         | 1          | Gain tremendous physical strength, though it's too slow to use in combat.      |
| Mislead             | 3          | Cause a moving target to move in whatever direction the spirit wishes.         |
| Misty Form          | 1          | The spirit can flow through any barrier that isn't watertight.                 |
| Mortal Disguise     | 1          | The spirit can look like a normal human being, except under close study.       |
| Myrmidon's Shield   | 3          | When your summoner takes a Traumatic Hit, take it in their place.              |
| Namebearer          | 1          | Gain a personal identity that persists through multiple summonings.            |
| Natural Immunity    | 1          | Become immune to a substance or source of harm in line with its nature.        |
| Poltergeist         | 1          | Telekinetically manipulate objects at a distance with a weak strength.         |
| Skilled             | 1          | Pick a skill or role and add +2 to the spirit's skill checks related to it.    |
| Spiderlegs          | 1          | Walk on vertical or overhanging surfaces as if they were flat ground.          |
| Spirit of War       | 1          | Enhance Violent Will's combat abilities, but become merciless in combat.       |
| Spirit Whispers     | 3          | Make a suggestion to a listener that they do not find deeply objectionable.    |
| Spirit's Eye        | 1          | Enhance the spirit's senses and grant it a +2 bonus to Notice checks.          |
| Swift Pursuit       | 1          | The spirit's Move increases by 10 meters and it gets +2 to chase things.       |
| Violent Will        | 1          | The spirit is capable of fighting, but will not use mortal arms or armor.      |

## SPIRIT POWERS

The powers listed here are simply the most common among summoned spirits. A given power can only be taken once by any given spirit. Rarer abilities are said to be possessed by some entities, and some magical traditions are thought to teach the knowledge of special arts to their initiates.

**Airy Steps:** The spirit can fly at its usual movement rate, though it cannot attack while flying. Physical spirits can carry up to 25 kilograms, or up to 500 if they have a *Mighty Form*.

**Artifice-Wise:** A spirit is capable of using daily human technology such as telephones, cars, and other common devices at an ordinary human level of skill. They are still unable to use human weapons or armor, however, including grenades, and they cannot function as hackers, technicians, or other tech-skilled professions regardless of their other powers.

**Aura of Destruction:** The spirit is mantled in toxic gases, bitter cold, leaping flames, crushing depression, or some other aura that causes harm to those who get too close. If the spirit can make melee attacks, it gains a damage bonus equal to half its hit dice, rounded up. If someone makes a melee attack against it, they must make an appropriate save or suffer the spirit's hit dice+2 in damage before the attack can be made. The save type will depend on the nature of the aura. Non-lethal auras can strike a victim unconscious but will not kill them. The spirit cannot "turn off" this aura.

**Curse:** As a Main Action, the spirit can blight a visible creature's luck, forcing a -1 to all skill checks and a -2 to all hit and damage rolls for the scene. At 7th level these penalties double. A creature can bear only one curse at a time, and the spirit can't curse more people in a single day than its hit dice.

**Ensnare:** The spirit can trap human-sized targets as a Main Action, provided they're within 30 meters and fail an Evasion save. If snared, it's two Main Actions for an ally to cut them free, or one successful Str/Exert check against difficulty 10. Ensnared enemies can still act, but cannot move from their location until the snare fades in five minutes. The spirit can't have more targets snared at once than its hit dice. Only spirits in physical form can take this power.

**Favor:** As a Main Action, the spirit graces a target's luck in a particular activity related to its nature, giving them a +1 to all related skill checks for a scene. If a combat blessing is given, the subject gets a +2 to hit and damage rolls. At 7th level, these benefits double. It's up to the GM to decide whether or not a particular activity is related to the spirit. A creature can bear only one favor at

a time and a spirit cannot favor more people in a day than its hit dice.

**Feral Pact:** Animals of the same general type as the spirit obey its commands, provided its commands are not contrary to their nature. This power is useless to spirits without an animal nature.

**Finned Swift:** The spirit gains a swimming movement rate equal to twice its normal Move.

**Flesh of Clay:** The spirit is not subject to Traumatic Hits, rather than having the usual Trauma Target of 6.

**Ghostly Presence:** The spirit is invisible to sight, including IR and similar exotic senses, until it takes a violent action, makes a disturbance, or uses a power on a target that allows a saving throw. Once this invisibility is lost, it cannot be regained for ten minutes.

**Hideous Talons:** The melee attack of *Violent Will* is improved. Its Shock now affects any AC and both damage and Shock are increased by +2. These benefits do not apply to any ranged attacks the spirit may make. Spirits summoned with this power always look dangerous or vicious, and cannot be disguised as something harmless.

**Iron Eidolon:** A *Physical Form* spirit is now immune to non-magical weapons that aren't Heavy. The psychic force inherent in unarmed attacks can still harm it, however, even if the assailant isn't magically-gifted.

**Merciful Hands:** The spirit can expend its power to heal an injured victim. As a Main Action, it can heal 1d8 HP to an adjacent ally. Each use of this power inflicts 1d8 damage to the spirit and adds one System Strain to the target. A spirit with this power will willingly use it even if it faces destruction by doing so.

**Mighty Form:** Requiring a physical form, this power enhances the spirit's strength. While this strength is too slowly-deployed to be useful in combat, with a Main Action the spirit can smash down an interior wall or standard exterior door, lift and carry up to five hundred kilograms, or otherwise perform similar feats of raw strength. If used against a helpless or immobile target, the spirit must have the *Violent Will* power. If so, the spirit's melee attacks against the helpless are an automatic Traumatic Hit and can cause harm even to vehicles.

**Mislead:** Once per round, as an Instant action, the spirit can target a moving person. If the target fails a Mental save, the spirit controls their intended movement, directing it in any direction that is not obviously dangerous out to the maximum of their normal Move action. If the victim is not aware of the spirit's interference, they will

think their course was somehow their own idea and try to rationalize why they did it.

**Misty Form:** The spirit can flow through any barrier that isn't watertight without impeding its movement. Even entities in *Spirit Form* can use this to seep through holes in barriers their manifested shape would otherwise be unable to pass.

**Mortal Disguise:** The spirit appears to be a normal human being on casual inspection, with the appearance and clothing the summoner wishes. Specific humans cannot be duplicated by this power, and close, careful inspection of the spirit will reveal its uncanny nature.

**Myrmidon's Shield:** As an Instant action, when the spirit's summoner takes a Traumatic Hit while the spirit is within 10 meters, the spirit can change the hit to a regular one. The spirit, however, then takes the Traumatic Hit. This damage affects the spirit even if it is otherwise immune to the weapon or to Traumatic Hits. A spirit with this power will willingly use it even if it faces destruction by doing so.

**Namebearer:** The spirit is named by the summoner. Even if destroyed, this specific spirit can be summoned again with all the knowledge and experiences it had before its destruction. While this preserves its personality and experiences, this also means that you must summon it with the same physical or spiritual manifestation and can only ever add powers to it; once you imbue it with *Hideous Talons*, for example, every future summoning of it must also have that power. Namebearers are slightly more durable, gaining +2 hit points per hit die. They're also more willful, adding +2 to the difficulty of imposing an unnatural command on them.

**Natural Immunity:** The spirit is impervious to some substance appropriate to its nature: a fire spirit could be immune to fire, a storm spirit to electricity, or so forth. This imperviousness cannot render it immune to normal weapons or attacks, and the GM rules on edge cases.

**Poltergeist:** As a Main Action, the spirit can telekinetically manipulate unattended objects within 20 meters as if with two unseen hands. This manipulation can lift no more than 20 kilograms and is too imprecise to deliver effective attacks or impede a resisting subject. Actions taken with this power do not disrupt *Ghostly Presence*, even if they cause a disturbance.

**Skilled:** The spirit is talented at a particular non-combat skill, gaining an additional +2 bonus to all rolls related to its use.

**Spiderlegs:** The spirit can stand or walk on sheer or overhanging surfaces as if they were flat ground.

**Spirit of War:** A spirit with a *Violent Will* has the power enhanced, granting it a tremendous zeal for bloodshed. It gains a bonus to its hit roll equal

to your Summon skill and no longer resists commands to engage in suicidal battles. It is incapable of inflicting non-lethal damage with its attacks, however, and will resist commands to spare downed opponents.

**Spirit Whispers:** As a Main Action, the spirit can make a suggestion to a listener that isn't longer than one sentence. If the suggestion is not deeply contrary to the target's nature or interests, they must make a Mental save or else carry it out for at least one round. If not given a reason to desist, the target may carry out the suggestion until it is complete or an hour has passed. A target can be subject to *Spirit Whispers* only once per scene.

**Spirit's Eye:** The spirit is capable of seeing clearly in the dark, hearing whispers at twenty meters, and identifying people by the scent they leave on objects they have recently touched. All Notice skill checks are made at +2.

**Swift Pursuit:** The spirit's Move rating is increased by 10m. It gains a +2 bonus on all skill checks related to chasing down a target.

**Violent Will:** A *Physical Form* spirit gains a base attack bonus equal to its hit dice +1 and does 1d10 damage on a melee hit plus one-half its hit dice, rounded down, with a melee Shock rating equal to half its hit dice, rounded down, against AC 15. At 5th level this attack can be used at range, up to 100 meters distant. If used lethally, the attack has a Trauma Rating of 1d8/x3. The spirit acts independently on its summoner's initiative in combat. *Spirit Forms* cannot take this power, and cannot directly harm creatures.

## AN EXAMPLE SPIRIT SUMMONING

Lucretia is pinned down in a dead-end alleyway with a dozen angry gunmen waiting around the corner for her to stick her head out. As she'd prefer to keep breathing, Lucretia quickly summons some help to get her out of this situation. A spider-spirit that can carry her up the wall to the safety of the rooftop should keep her hide intact.

Lucretia's a novice Summoner with a current Summoner Effort score of 2. She chooses to summon a physical Spider spirit, since she needs it to be able to carry her, so she gives her spirit the *Physical Form I* manifestation, which is the strongest version she can call. She also gives it the *Spiderlegs* power. Lucretia is a big girl, however, and a default spirit is no stronger than an ordinary human. She gives it the *Mighty Form* power so it's strong enough to carry her with ease.

She uses an immediate summoning, so she can call the spirit as a Main Action. It costs 2 points of Effort, one for each of its powers, minus Lucretia's Summon skill of 1, for a total of 1 point of Effort Committed for the day. The spirit will stick around until it's destroyed, dismissed, or an hour passes, but Lucretia can't summon more hit dice of spirits until it's gone.



## EXAMPLE SUMMONED SPIRITS

These entities are examples of the kind of spirits that summoners might beckon. Players are advised to draw up their likely summons before play or between sessions, so they don't take extra time putting them together in the middle of a fight or heist.

| Dogsbody            | Spirit of Home     |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 1 (5 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> None |
| <b>AC:</b> 12       | <b>Move:</b> 10m   |
| <b>Atk:</b> None    | <b>Skill:</b> +0   |
| <b>Dmg:</b> None    | <b>Save:</b> 15+   |

**Powers:** Physical Form I, Skilled (Housekeeping).

One of the first callings of most novice summoners, this spirit is usually called in the shape of an imp or homunculus. While helpless in battle, it can fetch, clean, and obediently serve its master. Some summoners add the *Namebearer* power to give the spirit a unique identity, forming a long-lasting bond with their diminutive valet. Others add *Artifice-Wise*, so the little devil can figure out how to use the stove.

| Sneak               | Spirit of Darkness |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 1 (5 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> None |
| <b>AC:</b> 10       | <b>Move:</b> 10m   |
| <b>Atk:</b> None    | <b>Skill:</b> +1   |
| <b>Dmg:</b> None    | <b>Save:</b> 15+   |

**Powers:** Spirit Form I, Skilled (Stealth).

A skulking wraith, a Sneak is a useful scouting spirit that even a novice summoner can call. With some extra time for a ritual summoning, some newbies add the *Spiderlegs* power to the spirit, or *Mislead* to help redirect patrolling guards.

| Porter              | Spirit of Toil     |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 1 (5 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> None |
| <b>AC:</b> 10       | <b>Move:</b> 10m   |
| <b>Atk:</b> None    | <b>Skill:</b> +1   |
| <b>Dmg:</b> None    | <b>Save:</b> 15+   |

**Powers:** Physical Form I, Mighty Form.

Squat and powerful, this spirit is sluggish but extremely strong. It can carry heavy loads for its master, break open troublesome barriers, and obey straightforward commands to labor. It is incapable of combat, however, having no conception of violence.

| Brute               | Spirit of Battle   |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 1 (5 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> None |
| <b>AC:</b> 12       | <b>Move:</b> 10m   |
| <b>Atk:</b> +2      | <b>Skill:</b> +0   |
| <b>Dmg:</b> 1d10    | <b>Save:</b> 15+   |

**Powers:** Physical Form I, Violent Will.

The simplest possible combat summons, the Brute attacks ferociously with its fangs and claws. While brave and relentless, it's of minimal use for more delicate jobs.

| Fury                  | Spirit of Battle  |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 1 (5 HP)   | <b>Shock:</b> 2/- |
| <b>AC:</b> 12         | <b>Move:</b> 10m  |
| <b>Atk:</b> +2+Summon | <b>Skill:</b> +0  |
| <b>Dmg:</b> 1d10+2    | <b>Save:</b> 15+  |

**Powers:** Physical Form I, Violent Will, Hideous Talons, Spirit of War.

The most powerful combat summons that a novice summoner is likely able to call, a Fury is significantly more dangerous than a Brute, but is even more blindly vicious. It offers no mercy to its prey.

| Fire Elemental       | Spirit of Flames      |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 4 (20 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> 2/AC 15 |
| <b>AC:</b> 15        | <b>Move:</b> 10m      |
| <b>Atk:</b> +5       | <b>Skill:</b> +1      |
| <b>Dmg:</b> 1d10+4   | <b>Save:</b> 13+      |

**Powers:** Physical Form II, Violent Will, Aura of Destruction (Fire), Natural Immunity (Fire). The summoner must be 5th level to call this spirit.

Called by experienced summoners when a very loud distraction is needed, fire elementals are perfectly happy to burn whatever their master desires... and occasionally things their master does not desire.

| Air Elemental        | Spirit of Winds    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>HD:</b> 4 (20 HP) | <b>Shock:</b> None |
| <b>AC:</b> 15        | <b>Move:</b> 20m   |
| <b>Atk:</b> None     | <b>Skill:</b> +1   |
| <b>Dmg:</b> None     | <b>Save:</b> 13+   |

**Powers:** Physical Form II, Airy Steps, Mighty Form, Swift Pursuit. The summoner must be 5th level to call this spirit.

Another favorite of experienced summoners, this wind spirit is strong enough to pick up and carry several allies through the air, and its mighty winds can blow down troublesome barriers.

| Vigil         | Spirit of Protection |
|---------------|----------------------|
| HD: 3 (15 HP) | Shock: None          |
| AC: 13        | Move: 15m            |
| Atk: None     | Skill: +1            |
| Dmg: None     | Save: 15+            |

**Powers:** Spirit Form II, Myrmidon's Shield, Merciful Hands, Ghostly Presence. The summoner must be 5th level to call this spirit.

The Vigil can do no harm to others, or even physically interact with most of the world around it. Even so, it gladly sacrifices its life to intercept mortal blows against its summoner or apply its healing powers to their wounds or the injuries of their allies.

| Chariot       | Spirit of Travel |
|---------------|------------------|
| HD: 4 (20 HP) | Shock: None      |
| AC: 15        | Move: 20m        |
| Atk: None     | Skill: +1        |
| Dmg: None     | Save: 13+        |

**Powers:** Physical Form II, Mighty Form, Swift Pursuit. The summoner must be 5th level to call this spirit.

Appearing as a horse-sized chariot or vehicle, this spirit can carry four cramped passengers at a brisk clip without need for a driver. While it appears as a vehicle, it suffers damage normally as a creature.

## MAGIC-USER FOCI

For GMs who want to customize the magic-users of their campaign world, Foci can be a useful tool. Some might be mandatory picks, while others could represent optional traditions or techniques a wizard could pick up.

One of the examples below grants a bonus Focus pick. This effectively makes the Focus a wash; it limits the caster in certain ways but benefits them in others. This kind of Focus can be useful if you want to give your PCs the option to become specific types of magic-users that may operate under different but equally-powerful rules.

### DEDICATED SUMMONER

You are specially pledged to a particular type or group of spirits. While you cannot call spirits of other kinds, you have more influence over your chosen allies.

**Level 1:** Gain the Summon skill and gain a bonus Focus pick of your choice. Choose up to four spirit natures, such as Fire, Earth, Forest, River, Bear, or so forth. You cannot summon spirits of other types, but your maximum Summoner Effort is increased by one and all spirits you summon have +5 hit points, +1 to attack rolls, and +1 to saving throws.

| Ravager         | Spirit of Slaughter |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| HD: 8 (40 HP)   | Shock: 6/-          |
| AC: 18          | Move: 10m           |
| Atk: +10+Summon | Skill: +2           |
| Dmg: 1d10+10    | Save: 11+           |

**Powers:** Physical Form III, Violent Will, Hideous Talons, Spirit of War, Aura of Destruction, Spiderlegs. The summoner must be 9th level to call this spirit.

A Ravager is one of the most powerful combat spirits capable of being summoned, and requires a master summoner to call forth. With five powers, an immediate summons of this creature by an expert with Summon-3 will still cost two Effort, though some add *Flesh of Clay* to make their pet immune to Traumatic Hits. As a summoner can't have more hit dice of minions summoned at once than their character level, most other spirits will need to be dispelled by the summoner before they have the room to call forth this beast.

A hulking, bloodsoaked humanoid with meter-long claws, this creature causes would-be melee attackers to sweat large amounts of blood when they strike at it. It can pursue its prey up sheer walls, and if necessary it can hurl fragments of bone like knives doing 1d10+6 damage. It prefers to butcher downed opponents before moving on to other active foes.

### ELEMENTAL MAGE

Your magic is aligned with one of the classical supernatural elements, infusing all your workings with its power.

**Level 1:** Gain the Cast skill as a bonus skill. Pick a classic magical "element" such as fire, cold, acid, electricity, or so forth. You become immune to non-lethal amounts of that energy and ignore the first lethal damage from it each scene. Your combat spells that cause physical damage manifest as that energy with a damage bonus equal to your level. You can conjure small amounts of that energy at will, usually enough for petty effects but not enough to cause injury or real damage.

### SOUL SIGHT

The eyes of a magically-gifted person can sometimes see the auras of living creatures.

**Level 1:** Gain Notice as a bonus skill. You can see living non-plant creatures even in complete darkness and can identify specific cyber they have implanted. As a Main Action you can focus on a person to identify their mood, any significant health problems they may have, and a sense of whether or not they are planning immediate violence.

# THE GRACED

Not every magically-gifted person expresses their powers in spellcasting or spirit summoning. A few such adepts have a natural talent for manifesting their arcane potential in the form of physical talents and augmentations. These “Graced” are unable to make effective use of cyberware, but their innate powers can grant them abilities that match many of the more synthetic advantages that cyberware provides.

## BECOMING GRACED

In order to gain these magical abilities, a PC must pick the *Graced Edge* during character creation. Like other magical Edges, PCs cannot become Graced later in their career.

Graced characters cannot take the *Spellcaster* or *Summoner* Edges; their magical abilities are manifesting through their physical prowess already, and the game balance value of their cyberware prohibition is minimal when their other knack has no use for it.

## GRACED ABILITIES

The chief strength of the Graced is their ability to channel the arcane potential of their spirits into tangible magical abilities. Unlike the flexible, ephemeral effects of spellcasting or spirit summoning, however, Graced “arts” are permanent or easily-summoned abilities that are much easier to invoke than spells.

These abilities are honed through tireless practice and determined study. More than a dozen arts are commonly known among the Graced, but particular traditions may exist that offer different talents. While it’s theoretically possible for a Graced to develop an entirely new form of art, such a feat would require both heroic effort and GM approval of the end result.

A Graced gets a certain number of **art points** with which to buy their arts. At first level, they get 2 points, which they can use to buy a single two-point art such

| GRACED ART POINTS |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Level             | Art Points Gained |
| 1                 | 2                 |
| 2                 | 1                 |
| 3                 | 1                 |
| 4                 | 2                 |
| 5                 | 0                 |
| 6                 | 1                 |
| 7                 | 0                 |
| 8                 | 2                 |
| 9                 | 1                 |
| 10                | 1                 |

as *Basic Alacrity*, or two one-point arts. As they increase in level, they get additional points. They can save these points for later purchases if they wish, but it takes a week or so to master an art once the PC decides to buy it.

Once an art is purchased, it’s permanent, and cannot be traded in for another. The exception is the *Alacrity* series of arts; lower-level versions of those can be upgraded later.



## GRACED AND CYBERWARE

Graced arts rely on a finely-balanced flow of magical energy within the user, a flow that cyberware badly disrupts. Each cyber system implanted in a Graced lowers their available art points by the cyber’s System Strain cost, to a minimum of a one point penalty even for minor or cosmetic cyber. This may cost the Graced the use of one or more arts until the cyber is removed.

While some arts mimic the use of cyberware, arts cannot be damaged by Major Injuries and they cannot be hacked or affected by other mechanisms that would normally affect cyberware. The mere fact that the Grace possesses these arts is also imperceptible to conventional medical examinations or cyberware detectors. If necessary, Graced can use magical prosthetics to overcome Major Injuries much as mages and summoners can.

## GRACED IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

If you choose to include the *Graced Edge* as an option in your campaign, you should keep in mind its value as compared to a more conventional heavily-cybered melee combatant or skill-focused mundane expert.

Graced are locked into their ability progression. For example, any Graced can eventually pick up *Sublime Alacrity*, but they can’t get it until level 3 at a minimum, and doing so means they can’t have any other arts. Conversely, a normal cyber-thug might not be able to afford *Enhanced Reflexes III* at third level, but they can kit themselves out with body blades and other benefits whenever they have the cash for it. If that cash never comes, the Graced is going to have a major edge.

Graced can’t be hacked. If your game doesn’t involve many NPC combat hackers threatening the PC borgs, this isn’t much of a benefit, but it can matter in a less data-permissive environment. A hostile Graced NPC can also prove a very large problem to a hacker PC optimized for shutting down enemy chrome.



## GRACED ARTS

Graced arts are listed with their art point cost in parentheses. Once an art is selected, it cannot be changed. Some arts improve the modifiers for physical statistics; such bonuses can't increase the total above +3.

Graced arts can be used at will, and are not hindered by injury, jostling, heavy armor, or other obstacles to spellcasting.

**Alacrity, Basic (2):** Your supernatural reflexes function in the same way as the *Enhanced Reflexes I* cyberware. You may later upgrade any level of *Alacrity* to its higher levels by paying the difference in point cost.

**Alacrity, Improved (3):** Your reflexes have been honed to be equivalent to *Enhanced Reflexes II* cyberware, with the same System Strain costs.

**Alacrity, Sublime (4):** Your blinding haste functions as if it were *Enhanced Reflexes III* cyberware, with the same System Strain costs.

**Arcane Senses (1):** You can see clearly in complete darkness, hear whispered conversations at twenty meters, and identify people and their belongings by scent. For any skill checks involving the acuity of your senses, you get a +1 bonus.

**Arcane Skill (1):** Pick a skill you have at level-0 or better that isn't a combat skill, Magic, or Program. Gain a +1 bonus to the skill's checks. If it requires human-portable tools or implements to function, such as a medkit or a toolbox, your art magically substitutes for the need.

**Blades of Will (1):** You can manifest arcane melee weapons of your choice as an On Turn action, using the statistics of any normally-available melee weapon. You can throw these weapons to attack, but they vanish if you merely drop them or fall unconscious. The weapons gain a bonus to hit, damage, and Shock equal to your character level divided by three, rounded down.

**Brazen Thews (1):** Your muscles are supernaturally reinforced, granting a +1 bonus to your Strength modifier, up to a maximum of +3.

**Faultless Grace (1):** Supernatural grace infuses your motions, and you gain a +1 bonus to your Dexterity modifier, up to a maximum of +3.

**Flying Steps (1):** When you move, you can leap horizontal or vertical distances up to your normal Move rating. You subtract your Move rating from any falling damage distance.

**Hand of Doom (1):** Your hands and feet have the hardness and durability of steel, and are impervious to most forms of damage. Your unarmed attacks now do 1d10 damage and Shock 2/15. They get a hit, damage, and Shock bonus equal to your level divided by three, rounded down. You may use unarmed attacks to inflict lethal damage with a 1d8 Trauma Die and a x3 Trauma Rating. The *Unarmed Combatant* Focus doesn't stack with this.

**Hundred Faces (2):** As a Main Action, shift your physical appearance to be that of any other humanoid between 1.5 and 2 meters in height. You can perfectly mimic people you've met personally, including retinal and fingerprint patterns, but not DNA. Your clothing alters its appearance as well, but armor subtlety can't be changed. Changes revert when you die or change back as an Instant action.

**Inexhaustible Vigor (1):** Your physical stamina and hardiness is enhanced, granting a +1 bonus to your Constitution modifier, up to +3.

**Marital Instinct (1):** You have a number of bonus combat rolls equal to your highest combat skill, to a minimum of one. As an On Turn action, you may choose to use one of these rolls to make an additional hit roll or damage roll, rolling multiple dice for the same attack. Only the best die is used, however, so if you spend a bonus roll to make a d20 hit roll twice or a 2d8 weapon damage twice, you use only the better of your results. As this is an On Turn action, you must choose to use this bonus before you make the roll. Your rolls refresh after a night's good sleep.

**Occult Pavis (2):** You are unusually resistant to hostile magic. You may roll all saves versus spells or magical effects twice, and take the better result. This cannot help against effects without a save.

**Personal Void (1):** You are linked with a personal extradimensional space that can contain up to 20 items of encumbrance or 50 kilos of bulk matter. Storing or retrieving one or more items takes a Main Action, and you must be holding an unattached, uncontested item to store it. Retrieved items such as weapons or armor can be Readied as part of the action if you have the strength for it. Living creatures can't be stored, and time passes normally within the space. If you die, your stored items spill out around you.

**Refulgent Vitality (1):** You automatically stabilize when brought to zero hit points, unless instantly killed by the damage, and you can regenerate Major Injuries with a week's rest. You heal twice your level in hit points with each night's rest, instead of your level alone.

**Skin of Steel (2):** Your flesh is highly resilient against harm. You gain a base armor class equal to fifteen plus half your level, rounded up, and a +1 bonus to your Trauma Target that increases to +2 at 5th level. This art does not stack with armor.

**Sorcerous Sight (1):** By examining an object, area, or person as a Main Action, you can see any active magic or enchantments and gain a one-sentence description of their effect.

**Spiritbane (1):** You add your level to all damage inflicted on spirits or magical constructs, including Shock. Once per round, as an Instant action, gain one System Strain to reroll a missed attack against such creatures.

# MAGIC ITEMS

For campaigns that pair sorcery with silicon, it's all but inevitable that a GM will want to include magic items and enchanted weaponry as possible rewards or finds for a team of operators. This section lays out the rules for such eldritch implements and gives tips on how to integrate them into your game.

## MAGIC ITEM ORIGINS

In some cases, you'll be using a campaign world that already provides an explanation for the existence of magical items. If that's the case, you can simply use the existing setting material, tweaking the items here to fit with the world you're using. If you're including magic in the game's default setting of the City, the origins of these magical devices are unclear, but appear to be related to the Bleed.

Almost all known magic items appear to be a hand-made object crafted with relatively primitive tools and techniques, albeit often with exquisite artistry. Inscriptions on the items exist in both known and unknown languages, but the former often reference people, events, and places that appear to have no terrestrial equivalent. These items are occasionally found in abandoned structures or forgotten caches of mundane goods, standing out by their elaborate or otherworldly construction, and some have been discovered in close proximity to masterless spirits, supernatural creatures, or extra-mundane phenomena.

A very few magic items appear very different, having apparently been crafted by some sort of advanced process or magical synthesis. Most researchers hypothesize that these devices owe more to highly advanced technology than sorcery, though others argue that *all* magic items are merely technological artifacts that rely on principles and processes that this-world humanity has yet to understand.

Despite the best efforts of corporate arcanists and private researchers, no provable method for creating significant magic items has been demonstrated to the public. Some hypothesize that such methods have been discovered already, but are being kept closely guarded by wary innovators. Even so, the best that modern research mages have been able to accomplish are certain persistent standing magical effects centered on ritually-prepared locations or significant monuments.

Expert arcanists can currently produce a few minor magical items, such as the arcane prosthetics used by Mages who have suffered organ or limb loss. These prosthetics have yet to outdo the efficiency of even very basic cybernetic devices, however, so further research has been discouraged. Aside from medical usage, these magical devices are found most often as toys, experiments, or very niche devices found in the hands of wealthy collectors and absent-minded wizards.

## IDENTIFYING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are all extremely durable, with even wood and fabric having the strength of steel or woven composites. They can be destroyed by intentional violence or willful misuse, but they do not rot, burn, or corrode as mundane objects do.

Magic items do not necessarily appear wondrous at first glance. While all of them are exquisitely crafted, some appear to be no more than a well-forged knife or slender wand of carved wood to a mundane eye. Magically-active observers, whether Graced, mage, or summoner, can identify the presence of magic in an object by touch alone, though not its exact effects.

Discerning the nature of the magical effect within an object requires time and expertise. If the item has a minimum magic skill level required for its use, that level of skill is necessary to identify its abilities. If not, anyone with Cast-0 or Summon-0 skill can identify the object's powers with a day's study.

## LINKING WITH MAGIC ITEMS

The great majority of magic items require linkage to the user before they can be used. This attunement blends the user's spiritual energies with the magical currents of the item, allowing their will to direct its function and activate its abilities. As a consequence, robots and other inanimate objects cannot link to magic items. Researchers hypothesize that animals and other non-sentient living creatures could link with an item in theory, but lack the directed volition required to catalyze the bond.

**Linkage requires a Main Action and inflicts one permanent point of System Strain on the wielder** that cannot be lost so long as the item remains linked to them. This effect is particularly pronounced for mages and summoners, as the foreign magical currents disrupt their own carefully-controlled energies; such arcanists must also permanently Commit one point of Mage Effort or Summoner Effort while the item is linked, recovering the point the morning after the linkage is ended.

**Linking or unlinking from an item requires a certain minimal amount of magical expertise.** Anyone with a magical Edge knows enough to do it or guide a teammate through the process, but those without such a helper who do not have Cast or Summon skills of their own cannot perform the process unaided. A purely intellectual knowledge of the process is sufficient; it is not necessary to actually be a spellcaster or summoner.

**An item can be linked to only one user at a time.** Linkages end when a new user imprints on the object or the existing owner spends an hour in careful meditation, unraveling their spiritual energies from the item. They need not have the item present to unlink from it.





## USING MAGIC ITEMS

Some magical items are used as part of their normal employment, such as magic weapons which are used as part of an attack. No special action is required to trigger their benefits. The same applies to certain arcane devices that are designed to protect the wearer or grant an automatic special benefit.

Other items, such as magic wands, require a Main Action to trigger their effects. This action is not disrupted by damage or physical jostling and can be performed by any user who is holding the object.

The effects of a magic item are generally obvious and connected with the item. Onlookers will be able to tell that something supernatural has happened, and will be able to connect it to the wand or device that launched the effect. Many such devices make loud noises, display brilliant lights, or otherwise make their use extremely obvious.

## OBTAINING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are not normally sold on the open market. Between governmental oversight, grasping megacorps, vengeful associates of former owners, and the difficulty of vending singular treasures to a market of extremely violent thieves, the trade in magic items is a strictly private affair. The occasional broker will assist in making transactions between interested parties, but there are no “magic shops” or fixed market prices for these goods.

Most often, magic items are either found on the corpses of their former wielders or given as payment for missions. Private exchanges among operatives are also not unknown, assuming they trust each other sufficiently. A PC who wants to obtain a particular magic item will generally need to adventure for it, seeking an owner willing to trade the item for the execution of some perilous job or special favor.

## MAGIC ITEMS AND MISSION REWARDS

GMs who want to include magic in their games need some guidelines on how much to hand out, whether as mission rewards or as loot that can be taken from downed foes or hidden caches. The amounts below are calibrated to a campaign where magic items are rare, but accessible to mid-level PCs and above. They should be taken as averages and not strict procedures; shuffle the placement around a little so the reward pattern isn't easily predictable by the PCs.

**Add one or two magic items to the rewards or loot between first and fourth levels.** First or second level may be early to let the PCs get their hands on magic gear, but by the time they've hit fourth level they should have seen an item or two, whether as offered mission rewards or as loot they picked up from the possessions of their defeated foes.

**For every four PCs, add one magic item per level after reaching fourth level.** Thus, a four-person team should reliably encounter about six magic items between fourth and tenth level as part of their usual play.

**Temporary or minor items count as half.** If the magic item is consumable or weak, count it as only half an item for calculation purposes.

**PCs can adventure for items.** If PCs want more magic, they can make an adventure out of hunting it down. It's up to you as to what items could or could not be found through legwork and risky missions. Take care not to make specific items an automatic option; it can tempt players to plan for optimized “builds” with ideal items for their specific character.

**Magic items have no experience point value** in cash-for-xp games. Their worth is in their utility, and even if the PCs sell them, that cash doesn't add to their experience total. Actually selling such items without getting robbed, conned, or targeted by the corps may amount to an adventure in itself.



## MAGICAL WEAPONS

Magical weapons are among the most eagerly-desired of arcane devices, not least because they are among the few reliable ways to harm powerful supernatural entities. Anyone can use a magical weapon if they successfully link to it, but they are found most often in the hands of combat operators and other specialists in physical violence.

Magic weapons rely on close contact with their wielder to maintain the necessary flow of arcane energy through the weapon. Because of this, ranged or thrown magic weapons are almost unknown; a hurled magic knife ceases to have any power as soon as it leaves its wielder's grasp. Even so, a few rare arcane weapons appear to have sidestepped this limitation by projecting bolts of energy or occult beams in place of physical projectiles, such as are employed by the few magical bows known to exist.

### MAGIC WEAPON QUALITIES

By common convention, *magical weapons all have names*. Some are discovered with their names physically inscribed on the weapon, others are given names by their first wielder, and some earn new names through their involvement in some dramatic combat or event.

*Every magic weapon has a special power* associated with it, often one that defies common magical understanding. These powers may require a specific sort of wielder to trigger, or a particular kind of target, or even a specific type of situation. Some of these powers

are relatively minor, while others can have a dramatic effect on an encounter. Most usually require some investment from the wielder, usually inflicting System Strain or being usable only a few times in a day. The same power has been known to exist in more than one magic weapon, though often with different aesthetics or manifestation details.

For conventional combat purposes, *all magic weapons have at least a +1 bonus to their hit rolls, damage rolls, and Shock damage*. The most powerful weapons have as much as a +3 bonus to these qualities, though no magic weapon has any benefit at all in the hands of an unlinked wielder. Magic weapons cannot be modded.

*A magic weapon requires substantial commitment of spiritual energy* in order to function, and a wielder who links more than one weapon incurs an increasingly-heavy burden on their physical body. Each magic weapon linkage after the first incurs a cumulative additional +1 System Strain. This increase also applies to any Mage Effort or Summoner Effort cost that must be Committed. As such, very few users bear more than one magic weapon at a time.

Most owners of a magic weapon learn tactics or develop maneuvers that rely on the weapon's power. Those who care only for raw violence often prefer highly-modded conventional weapons, but a wielder with cunning and imagination can use a magic weapon in ways that trump mere brute force.



## WEAPON POWERS

A GM who means to create a magic weapon can consult these tables to get ideas for the weapon's special power. The weapon's basic theme indicates what kind of effect it should have, and the subject of that theme indicates what target, situation, or substance should be involved.

Thus, a roll of "Destruction/Rage" might give a GM for an idea of a weapon that pacifies the people it hits, forcing them to make a Mental save or cease fighting for 1d6 rounds. A "Protection/Mist" roll might allow the weapon to throw up a defensive cloud of mist that blocks vision and provides cover from ranged attacks.

Weapon powers should usually cost 1 System Strain to trigger and should produce effects that don't last more than 1d6 rounds in most cases. Permanent benefits or boosts are possible, but should be minor in effect in all but the most powerful weapons.

A weapon's hit and damage bonus should usually be +1, though mid-level PCs could merit +2 and top elites +3. Narrow classes of targets may grant a bonus.

| d00   | Subject        | d00   | Subject             |
|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1-2   | Animals        | 51-52 | Limbs               |
| 3-4   | Armor          | 53-54 | Luck                |
| 5-6   | Bargains       | 55-56 | Magic               |
| 7-8   | Birds          | 57-58 | Magic Users         |
| 9-10  | Blood          | 59-60 | Metal               |
| 11-12 | Darkness/Light | 61-62 | Mist                |
| 13-14 | Death          | 63-64 | Nearby Locations    |
| 15-16 | Desires        | 65-66 | Plants              |
| 17-18 | Disease        | 67-68 | Quickness           |
| 19-20 | Distance       | 69-70 | Rage                |
| 21-22 | Doors          | 71-72 | Sand                |
| 23-24 | Earth          | 73-74 | Sky                 |
| 25-26 | Emotions       | 75-76 | Sleep               |
| 27-28 | Eyes           | 77-78 | Sound               |
| 29-30 | Fear           | 79-80 | Space               |
| 31-32 | Fire           | 81-82 | Specific Profession |
| 33-34 | Flesh          | 83-84 | Spirits             |
| 35-36 | Friends        | 85-86 | Strength            |
| 37-38 | Glass          | 87-88 | Time                |
| 39-40 | Gravity        | 89-90 | Type of Terrain     |
| 41-42 | Heat/Cold      | 91-92 | Walls               |
| 43-44 | Hunger         | 93-94 | Water               |
| 45-46 | Impact         | 95-96 | Weapons             |
| 47-48 | Insects        | 97-98 | Weather             |
| 49-50 | Lightning      | 99-00 | Wood                |

| d8 | Theme          | d6 | Example Effect                       |
|----|----------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1  | Augmenting     | 1  | Heal or repair it.                   |
|    |                | 2  | Make it stronger or quicker.         |
|    |                | 3  | Make it bigger.                      |
|    |                | 4  | Spread it around further.            |
|    |                | 5  | Improve what it primarily does.      |
|    |                | 6  | Give it an entirely new trait.       |
| 2  | Control        | 1  | Control its movements or actions.    |
|    |                | 2  | Control its thoughts or desires.     |
|    |                | 3  | Redirect its actions at new targets. |
|    |                | 4  | Prohibit it from a certain action.   |
|    |                | 5  | Activate its abilities or powers.    |
|    |                | 6  | Affect its rolls or random chances.  |
| 3  | Destruction    | 1  | Do more damage to it.                |
|    |                | 2  | Temporarily nullify it.              |
|    |                | 3  | Regenerate when you kill it.         |
|    |                | 4  | Gain a buff when you kill it.        |
|    |                | 5  | Harm it automatically.               |
|    |                | 6  | Gain a bonus to hit it.              |
| 4  | Illusion       | 1  | Create an illusion of it.            |
|    |                | 2  | Hide it with an illusion.            |
|    |                | 3  | Use elements of it for illusions.    |
|    |                | 4  | Make a semi-real image of it.        |
|    |                | 5  | Appear as if you were it.            |
|    |                | 6  | Make an autonomous image of it.      |
| 5  | Protection     | 1  | Resist the harm it does.             |
|    |                | 2  | Make a barrier against it.           |
|    |                | 3  | Protect it from other things.        |
|    |                | 4  | Make it harmless to you.             |
|    |                | 5  | Defend against a quality of it.      |
|    |                | 6  | Use it to protect yourself.          |
| 6  | Sensing        | 1  | Locate it nearby.                    |
|    |                | 2  | See through it from afar.            |
|    |                | 3  | Sense its purpose or thoughts.       |
|    |                | 4  | Predict its actions or future.       |
|    |                | 5  | Learn its secrets or nature.         |
|    |                | 6  | Cloud or control its senses.         |
| 7  | Transformation | 1  | Become it in some way.               |
|    |                | 2  | Change it into something else.       |
|    |                | 3  | Acquire one of its traits.           |
|    |                | 4  | Weaken one of its qualities.         |
|    |                | 5  | Hinder it with a change.             |
|    |                | 6  | Overcome one of its traits.          |
| 8  | Transportation | 1  | Bring it closer to you.              |
|    |                | 2  | Bring yourself closer to it.         |
|    |                | 3  | Magically move around in it.         |
|    |                | 4  | Move faster in it.                   |
|    |                | 5  | Make others slower in it.            |
|    |                | 6  | Move it around.                      |

## MAGIC WEAPON TYPES

The adjacent table shows some of the forms a magical weapon can take. Swords are among the most common finds, but daggers and spears aren't unusual either.

The statistics given on the table don't include the magical bonus of the weapon, which adds to its hit roll, damage roll, and Shock value. Magical weapons tend to bite deeper than mundane steel, and so have a bonus to their Trauma Die as listed on the table. Non-magical weapon equivalents will lack this +1.

## EXAMPLE MAGIC WEAPONS

The powers possessed by the weapons described below are just some of the possibilities that could be displayed. Almost all weapons have only one power, but exceptionally mighty weapons might have two or three, all revolving around a central theme or ability. Such legendary artifacts usually come with commensurately dire costs to the wielder, some of them being lethal over time.

**Ad Portas (+2 Club):** Once per scene, as a Main action, gain one System Strain and strike a door no larger than a large garage door. It immediately shuts and cannot be opened for a day and a night, though it still can be destroyed. (Protection/Doors)

**Beckoner (+2 Long Sword):** Three times per day, as an On Turn action, accept a point of System Strain and target something no bigger than a person within 30 meters. The distance between you is negated as it immediately appears adjacent to you. (Destruction/Space)

**Canter's Tongue (+1 Dagger):** Once per day, as a Main Action, gain one System Strain while attempting to persuade a self-acknowledged thief or robber of something. They must make a Mental save or accept your proposal unless it's utterly out of character for them. The bewitchment lasts until dawn, after which their normal reason reasserts itself. (Control/Specific Profession)

**Frostfell (+1 Long Sword):** A frigid aura renders the wielder immune to the first 10 points of fire or explosive damage they take in a round. (Destruction/Fire)

**Gatefinder (+1 Short Sword):** Once per day, as a Main Action, gain one System Strain while concentrating on a particular facility, building, or specific location within 1,000 meters. Gain a brief vision of the safest, most accessible entry or exit point to it and a sense of its location. (Sense/Doors)

**Huang's Luck (+2 Long Sword):** The first time in a day you miss a lethally-intended attack against a person with the sword, you may gain one System Strain as an Instant action to charge the sword. Until dawn the next day, you may expend this charge as an On Turn action to count your next hit roll with the sword as a 19. (Control/Luck)

**Longing's Gift (+2 Claw Blades):** Once per day, as a Main Action, gain one System Strain and target a creature within 10 meters. The claws catch their current emotion, leaving them feeling calm and dispassionate for the scene. That emotion can be released up to 12 hours later as a Main Action targeting another creature within 10 meters; they must make a Mental save or feel it with the same intensity as the original creature did, rationalizing it as best they can. (Transportation/Desires)

**Memento Mori (+1 Greatsword):** Once per day, as an Instant action, gain one System Strain when you miss a creature with the sword. They must immediately make a Morale check at a -1 penalty or be gripped by a terror of death. (Illusion/Fear)

**Old Possum (+2 Great Hammer):** As an Instant action when you touch a target with Old Possum, whether gently or as a hit, gain one System Strain. The target appears to be instantly smashed and mangled in an unsurvivable way, though they can continue moving and acting normally if they wish. The illusion lasts for one hour. (Illusion/Impact)

**Pactmaker (+2 Dagger):** Once per day, make a small cut on both yourself and a person who has made a pledge with you, gaining one System Strain. If either of you breaks the agreement, the culprit takes damage as if stabbed by Pactmaker for maximum damage, with a +2 bonus to its Trauma Die. This enforcement lasts for up to one week, during which you cannot lose the System Strain cost. (Protection/Bargains)

**Raphael's Fang (+1 Light Spear):** Whenever you have the spear Readied you sense blood in a six-meter radius, knowing its location and original owner intuitively. Walls and other barriers block this sense, but you can otherwise fight blood-containing foes even while blind. (Sense/Blood)

**Ravener (+1 War Axe):** This axe grows stronger the more famished the wielder is. Spending a day without eating makes it a +2 weapon and adds one System Strain to the user. Spending three or more days makes it a +3 weapon and adds three total System Strain to the user. So long as the axe remains linked the wielder can go indefinitely without food, but System Strain cannot be recovered while fasting. (Transform/Hunger)

**Red Haze (+3 Long Sword):** As an Instant action when taking hit point damage from an attack, the user can gain a System Strain point and go into a berserk rage. They roll all damage rolls twice, taking the higher result, and heal 5 hit points every time they kill a person. While berserk they can do nothing but try to kill people in the most direct way possible and must always coup de grace mortally-wounded foes before finding fresh enemies. Ending the berserk requires a Main Action and a successful Mental Save. (Transform/Rage)



| Weapon        | Dmg  | Shock   | Attribute | Trauma Die | Traits | Enc |
|---------------|------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|-----|
| Axe, Hand     | 1d6  | 1/AC 15 | Str/Dex   | 1d8+1/x3   |        | 1   |
| Axe, War      | 1d10 | 3/AC 15 | Str       | 1d8+1/x4   | 2H     | 2   |
| Claw Blades   | 1d6  | 2/AC 13 | Str/Dex   | 1d6+1/x3   | S      | 1   |
| Club          | 1d4  | None    | Str/Dex   | 1d6+1/x2   | LL     | 1   |
| Club, Great   | 1d10 | 2/AC 15 | Str       | 1d8+1/x3   | 2H     | 2   |
| Dagger        | 1d4  | 1/AC 15 | Str/Dex   | 1d6+1/x3   | S, PM  | 1   |
| Halberd       | 1d10 | 2/AC 15 | Str       | 1d10+1/x3  | 2H, L  | 2   |
| Hammer, Great | 1d10 | 2/AC 18 | Str       | 1d8+1/x3   | 2H     | 2   |
| Hammer, War   | 1d8  | 1/AC 18 | Str       | 1d8+1/x3   |        | 1   |
| Mace          | 1d6  | 1/AC 18 | Str       | 1d8+1/x2   | LL     | 1   |
| Pike          | 1d8  | 1/AC 18 | Str       | 1d8+1/x3   | 2H, L  | 2   |
| Spear, Heavy  | 1d10 | 2/AC 15 | Str       | 1d10+1/x3  | 2H     | 2   |
| Spear, Light  | 1d6  | 2/AC 13 | Str/Dex   | 1d8+1/x3   |        | 1   |
| Staff         | 1d6  | 1/AC 13 | Str/Dex   | 1d6+1/x2   | 2H, LL | 1   |
| Stiletto      | 1d4  | 1/AC 18 | Dex       | 1d8+1/x2   | S, PM  | 1   |
| Sword, Great  | 1d12 | 2/AC 15 | Str       | 1d10+1/x3  | 2H     | 2   |
| Sword, Long   | 1d8  | 2/AC 13 | Str/Dex   | 1d8+1/x3   |        | 1   |
| Sword, Short  | 1d6  | 2/AC 15 | Str/Dex   | 1d8+1/x2   |        | 1   |

**S:** subtle and can be hidden in pockets or as decorations **LL:** non-lethal by default, **2H:** Requires two hands to use, **PM:** When used for an Execution Attack, the weapon applies an additional -1 penalty to the Physical save and does double damage even if it succeeds

**L:** Can make melee attacks on foes up to 3 meters distant, but still must be in normal melee range for other uses such as rifle binding or forcing Fighting Withdrawals on melee foes

**Scalder (+1 Hand Axe):** Once per target per scene, as an Instant action, a visible creature who has just suffered damage from heat or explosion must make a Physical save or take maximum damage. (Augment/Heat)

**Scrollcutter (+2 Greatsword):** Once per scene, as an Instant action, gain one System Strain and give up your next Main Action to physically cleave apart a spell that is being cast on you or an area you occupy. The spell is negated entirely. Existing spells cannot be cleaved this way. (Protection/Magic Users)

**Side Door (+2 Short Sword):** Twice per day, as a Main Action, gain one System Strain and strike a wall with the blade. The wielder is immediately transported to the opposite side of the wall. (Transportation/Walls)

**Sirocco (+2 Halberd):** Once per scene, as an On Turn action, gain one System Strain. Until the end of the following round you are veiled by the cloud of a phantom sandstorm that conceals you even from gunlinks and similar targeting cyber, inflicting a -4 penalty on all hit rolls against you and making you immune to Shock while concealed. (Illusion/Sand)

**Stoneharrow (+1 War Hammer):** Once per day, as a Main action, gain one System Strain and strike earth or stone. In a 3-meter radius around the blow, the earth or rock reshapes itself as you wish. The change isn't fast enough to trap people, but it can destabilize structures. (Control/Earth)

**The Slow Knife (+2 Stiletto):** Once per day, as a Main action, gain one System Strain and do not make an attack for the rest of the round. The next round, the first attack you make with the Slow Knife automatically hits for maximum damage and ignores any attack-negating abilities or cyber activations. The Trauma Die for this attack is rolled with a +1 bonus. (Control/Quickness)

**Thunderclap (+2 Mace):** The wielder is immune to electrical damage. Once per day as a Main Action while it's raining or storming, target a visible creature or object within 100 meters. They're struck by lightning for 6d6 damage. This power cannot function indoors. (Augment/Weather)

## MAGICAL ELIXIRS

Discovered as oils, potions, pastes, and essences, magical elixirs are usually found in ornate glass bottles or metal flasks, each usually containing a few ounces of enchanted liquid. While elixirs are single-use items, they are considerably easier to use than most magical artifacts.

### USING ELIXIRS

*Consuming or applying an elixir requires a Main Action.*

Only one elixir can be used per round, even with bonus actions; the magic can only take effect so quickly, and cybernetic reflexes doesn't hasten it.

*Employing an elixir adds one System Strain to the user*, even if it's a paste to be applied, a toxin to be administered, or some delayed-action fluid that is only triggered later. Activating the magic in an elixir requires a degree of spiritual energy regardless of how it is applied. Without this System Strain, the liquid is expended uselessly.

*Elixirs do not need to be linked*, however, and can be utilized by anyone who can get their hands on them. As each one is a rare artifact discovered by salvagers or operatives, however, few teams have the opportunity to load up with many of these magical flasks. The elixirs described below are just a sample of possibilities.

**Dissolution:** This elixir comes in the form of a thick, greenish paste which must be applied to an inanimate object as a Main Action. Once applied, the user can trigger the elixir to disintegrate up to one meter's thickness of whatever the paste is covering. One vial of the elixir can cover up to a 2x1 meter rectangle. The paste loses its virtue and can no longer be triggered after fifteen minutes.

**Dragonsbreath:** After drinking the elixir, the user can exhale a single cone of flame as a Main Action, inflicting 10d6 damage on every creature within the blast. The cone can extend up to ten meters long and ten meters wide at its far end. The drinker can defer this elixir's effect for up to 24 hours before exhaling the flame, but if they are rendered unconscious before they've used it they will suffer the 10d6 damage instead, exploding in a 5 meter radius if reduced to zero hit points.

**Fireproofing:** The drinker and their possessions are immune to injury from heat or smoke, and are unaffected by explosives of grenade-size or smaller. They can see clearly through smoke or fog. The elixir's effects last for up to an hour.

**Flickering:** For the next hour, the drinker becomes capable of teleporting as a Move action out to their normal Move distance. They can teleport to any point they can directly see or that they have occupied within the past hour, assuming it's within range.

### d20 Type of Elixir

|    |                |
|----|----------------|
| 1  | Dissolution    |
| 2  | Dragonsbreath  |
| 3  | Fireproofing   |
| 4  | Flickering     |
| 5  | Flight         |
| 6  | Fluidity       |
| 7  | Fury           |
| 8  | Grace          |
| 9  | Invigoration   |
| 10 | Luck           |
| 11 | Obliteration   |
| 12 | Persuasion     |
| 13 | Regeneration   |
| 14 | Revenance      |
| 15 | Seeing         |
| 16 | Sharpness      |
| 17 | Transformation |
| 18 | Translucence   |
| 19 | Warding        |
| 20 | Youth          |

**Flight:** The drinker can fly at their normal movement rate, carrying as much as their normal Encumbrance allows. If killed or knocked unconscious, they float to the ground. The elixir lasts for up to fifteen minutes.

**Fluidity:** The drinker and all their possessions acquire a semi-gelatinous consistency, being able to pass through any cracks or crevices large enough to admit water at their normal movement rate. As a Main Action, they can transform themselves into a two-meter-wide puddle of seeming water, during which they can observe their surroundings normally. They remain vulnerable to ordinary harm in this gelatinous state, which lasts for up to an hour.

**Fury:** The drinker is consumed with blinding rage, becoming incapable of anything but melee combat with their foes. All actions they take must be related to meleeing their enemies while the elixir is in effect. While enraged, the user gains a +3 bonus to hit, damage, and Shock and regenerates five lost hit points at the start of each of their turns, even after being reduced to zero hit points. The elixir lasts for up to five minutes, though the drinker can try to end it early with a Main Action and a successful Mental save.

**Grace:** For one hour, the drinker becomes inhumanly nimble and graceful, increasing their effective Dex modifier by +1 up to +3 maximum, adding 5 meters to their Move rate, and being able to climb walls or cross difficult terrain at their full movement rate with no chance of failure.

**Invigoration:** The drinker is restored to full hit points immediately. Lost limbs, destroyed organs, and other major injuries are not cured, but the user is otherwise rendered as healthy as their remaining body parts allow. This potion will work on a drinker only once per day.

**Luck:** For the next hour, the drinker is blessed with enormous luck. They have a 90% chance of winning any game of pure chance, a +2 bonus on any skill-influenced gambling game skill check, and automatically succeed on any Luck saves. Once during the elixir's effect, they can force the reroll of any check or attack roll they made or that is made against them. The potion's effects end prematurely on a natural attack roll of 1 or a natural skill check roll of 2.

**Obliteration:** Someone who drinks this pungent, vinegary elixir will be immediately reduced to two hundred grams of fine black ash, with no saving throw. If the elixir is diluted with some other liquid to disguise it the victim gets a Physical saving throw to resist the effect, with a +4 bonus if they're otherwise immune to toxins.

**Persuasion:** This elixir lasts for up to an hour, or until the drinker employs its effects on a target. The user must be trying to persuade a specific visible listener of the truth of what they say, a truth that cannot be physically impossible or emotionally unendurable for the target. The target can make a Mental save at a penalty equal to the drinker's Talk skill; on a failure, they come to believe the user's statement for a day and a night. After that point, their natural reason reasserts itself.

**Regeneration:** One missing limb, damaged organ, or other major injury is immediately remedied. The user's hit points are increased to half their maximum, rounded down, if lower than that currently. This potion will work on a drinker only once per month.

**Revenance:** This potion is meant to be fed to a fresh corpse, being lethally poisonous to living drinkers who fail a Physical saving throw. For a relatively intact corpse, it provides just enough animating force to allow the body to answer up to three questions. The answers are always truthful, but the corpse is incapable of exerting its own judgment or imagination. It will only answer with direct facts and obviously-related information. The corpse makes a secret Physical save when this elixir is administered; on a success, it instead answers with very plausible lies. Once the elixir wears off, the body decays into dust.

**Seeing:** This ointment must be applied to the user's eyes, after which they become capable of seeing through darkness, smoke, mist, liquids, or any other non-solid matter before them for the next hour. If they spend one minute searching an area for a particular thing or a type of object, they will find it if it is present unless the object is magically concealed. They gain a +2 bonus to all Notice skill checks and are immune to surprise.

**Sharpness:** This elixir must be applied to an edged weapon or cybersystem to be useful. Once the weapon is so anointed, it gains a +3 bonus to hit, damage and Shock, counts as a magic weapon, and can reroll a missed hit roll once per fight. The elixir's effects last for one hour.

**Transformation:** After drinking this elixir the user has one round to envision a particular humanoid shape within 50% of their own mass. They immediately transform into that shape, retaining it for the next forty-eight hours. If a specific person they have personally met is chosen, the imposture is perfect down to a retinal/DNA level. Otherwise, the duplicate is no better than their imagination can conjure.

**Translucence:** The drinker and everything they're wearing or carrying becomes almost entirely transparent and loses any infrared signature. A +3 bonus is gained on all Sneak checks, and they can perform Sneak checks even under circumstances that would normally be impossible, such as walking right in front of a watchful guard. Any ranged attacks against them take a -4 penalty, assuming they're spotted. The potion's effects last fifteen minutes.

**Warding:** This elixir is spread in a line, with up to five meters of line being drawn as a Main Action and up to fifteen meters total allowed. Once the line is finished, the user can trigger the elixir as an On Turn action, forbidding any living creature from crossing it without their permission. Those who cross without the user's leave take 6d6 damage, with a Physical save for half. The ward's power lasts for up to fifteen minutes.

**Youth:** A vanishingly rare potion, roll again if this result is obtained; the potion is only that of Youth if a second result is the same. The person who drinks a potion of Youth is immediately restored to their twenty-first year, or made fifty years younger if they're already over seventy-one. While potent, the elixir's effects are somewhat unpredictable; when this potion is drunk, a 1d6 is rolled, and the drinker is de-aged into oblivion if a 1 is rolled. This effect is automatic for those who drink more than one elixir of Youth.



## MAGICAL CYSTS

Named for their quality of encysting magical energies, a cyst usually takes the form of a parchment scroll, glowing jewel, small clay tablet, or other small trinket. While they often appear fragile to casual examination, they are impervious to anything short of intentional destruction. Within each cyst is trapped a single-use magical spell or spirit summoning, and a properly-educated wielder can trigger these energies when necessary.

Conventional cysts contain either a magical spell or a summoned spirit. Rumors persist of stranger varieties of cyst that produce non-standard magical effects when triggered, but examples of these oddities are not in common circulation.

### USING CYSTS

**A wielder must link with a cyst** before it can be triggered, gaining a point of System Strain that cannot be lost until after the link is ended or the item is expended. The self-contained nature of a cyst's energies do not interfere with the powers of a magician, however, and so mages and summoners need not Commit any Effort to link with a cyst.

**To trigger a cyst, it must be grasped firmly, presented before the wielder, and consciously activated with the correct verbal invocation.** For cysts containing spells, at least Cast-0 skill is needed to activate them, while cysts containing spirits require Summon-0. Anyone with the requisite skill can activate a cyst, whether or not they're a mage or summoner. Cysts can be triggered even if the wielder has suffered damage that round or been jostled, provided they still have a hand free and can speak the trigger invocation.

In extremis, a trained arcanist can instruct an unskilled user in the correct methods for triggering a particular cyst, but the variables of activation cannot always be predicted. Such unprepared users must roll 1d4 when they trigger a cyst; on a roll of 1, the spell is mis-targeted or the spirit summoned is hostile and uncooperative.

**A spell cast by a cyst is cast as if by a level 1d8+2 caster, while a spirit summoned by a cyst persists for a maximum of one scene.** Summoned spirits will obey the wielder as usual. Once a cyst has been triggered, it disintegrates into ashes or dust.



### GENERATING A CYST

When a cyst is generated by the GM, a roll on the table below will indicate the general contents. In the case of a spell, the GM should pick one from the spell list, while a spirit should be chosen from the examples in this book or built accordingly.

#### MAGIC CYST CONTENTS

| d100  | Power the Cyst Contains                    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1-66  | A magic spell                              |
| 67-70 | Spirit with Physical Form I and 2 powers   |
| 71-74 | Spirit with Physical Form I and 3 powers   |
| 75-77 | Spirit with Physical Form II and 3 powers  |
| 78-80 | Spirit with Physical Form II and 4 powers  |
| 81-82 | Spirit with Physical Form III and 4 powers |
| 83    | Spirit with Physical Form III and 5 powers |
| 84-87 | Spirit with Spirit Form I and 2 powers     |
| 88-91 | Spirit with Spirit Form I and 3 powers     |
| 92-94 | Spirit with Spirit Form II and 3 powers    |
| 95-97 | Spirit with Spirit Form II and 4 powers    |
| 98-99 | Spirit with Spirit Form III and 4 powers   |
| 00    | Spirit with Spirit Form III and 5 powers   |

## MAGICAL WANDS

Most of these spell-channeling devices take the form of slender wands of wood or metal, usually elaborately engraved and worked. Others manifest as meter-long rods, or even larger staves. A few have been discovered as gloves, crowns, or other items of clothing, and some say that even rings and bracelets can possess the qualities of a magic wand. Whatever their form, all are as durable as solid steel regardless of their apparent composition.

Wands, while magical, do not normally function as magical weapons should some mage decide to beat a spirit over the head with their staff. At most, they function as normal improvised weapons of their general shape.

### USING WANDS

**Wands function only for PCs with the Spellcaster Edge.** Without the innate ability to channel magical forces into spellcasting, wands are effectively inert. As with other magic items, **casters must link with the wand before they can use it**, Committing a point of Mage Effort that remains in use until the morning after they sever the link and accepting one point of System Strain that cannot be recovered until after the link is ended.

**Every wand is charged with a single spell.** A wielder can cast the spell through the wand whether or not they have it prepared, using all the usual rules and limits for spellcasting, including the limits on taking hit point damage in the same round. **Once triggered, the spell is cast with the force and qualities of a 1d8+2nd level caster**, determined separately for each wand and used thereafter each time the spell is cast. Spells with an indefinite duration last no longer than one scene. Spells that have an augmented effect if Effort is Committed for the day instead of the scene can be used either with their base effect or augmented effect, at the wielder's discretion.

**Casting spells through a wand does not require Mage Effort.** The first time the wand is used each day, the spell's casting is free. **After the first daily use, casting the spell through the wand costs one System Strain** for each use. If the wielder cannot accept this strain or does not want to accept it, they can overcast through the wand at a -3 penalty on the overcast roll.

When a GM creates a wand, they should pick a spell from the list on page 234 to embed in it, whether randomly or by specific choice.

### MAGIC WAND TRAITS

| d100  | Special Trait    |
|-------|------------------|
| 1-4   | Blank            |
| 5-6   | Contingent       |
| 8-10  | Hungry           |
| 11-13 | Jealous          |
| 14-16 | Martial +1       |
| 17-18 | Martial +2       |
| 19    | Martial +3       |
| 20-22 | Multifarious     |
| 23-24 | Polymorphic      |
| 25    | Reserve          |
| 26-00 | No Special Trait |

### WAND SPECIAL TRAITS

Some wands are discovered with unusual traits or special abilities. While uncommon, these quirks can be useful to an owner.

**Blank:** The wand is yet incomplete. A spellcaster can cast a spell into the wand; that spell is thereafter permanently imprinted on it.

**Contingent:** The wand is semi-sentient, and as a Main Action can be given a one-sentence condition under which to cast its spell. It can do this independently up to once per day, with no chance of disruption, but doing so adds 2 System Strain to the user in addition to any base cost.

**Hungry:** The wand requires regular small animal sacrifices and placating rites. Its lends its strength to the wielder, however, increasing their maximum hit points by 5.

**Jealous:** The linked wielder can't cast the wand's spell through normal spellcasting, but the wand's effective casting level is +2, to a maximum of 10.

**Martial:** The wand can be used as a magical weapon with the listed bonus, usually as a dagger, stiletto, club, or quarterstaff. Martial wands have no special weapon powers.

**Multifarious:** The wand is embedded with two spells instead of one. Either can be used when the wand is triggered.

**Polymorphic:** The wand can transform into or out of a seemingly-innocuous item of jewelry or clothing as an On Turn action.

**Reserve:** The wand amplifies the wielder's magical abilities, increasing their maximum Mage Effort by one point.

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Dee, Troy Ellis, Troy Martin, Troy Otway, Troy Smith, Truchainz, Trystan Davis, Tseb, tsynr, Tucker Conklin, Tyler Backous, Tyler Brenman, Tyler Duckworth, Tyler Hunt, Tyler J Cvetan, Tyler Jackson, Tyler Martinez, Tyler Solorio, Tyler Spears, Tyler Wirth, Tyrone Anderson, Uffda, Ulf H., Ulysses\_New\_God\_of\_Death, unclebrat, Undead, Universal Knight, unseenlibrarian, V. K. Allen, Val K., Valentin Velonir, Valor Guzman, Valthek, Vandemonde, Vanity Press, Vanya Evette Spiderfist, Vega Sera, VeiledMalice, Vengeance and Butcher, Verri, Vex Godglove, Vic Smith, Vicente Cartas Espinel, VickyR, Victarion, Victor P. Haerincck Jr., Victor\_V, Victoria Markus, Victoria McNary, Viktor Haag, Viktor Triumph, Vince Kindfuller, Vince Kolman, Vincent Brayer, Vincent Brown, Vincent Hamilton, Vincent Hudon, Vincent Patriti, Vincent Pellerin, Vincent Stoneking, Vintage RPG, Vivian Burning, Vladimir Filipovic, Vrekia Sharp, W. Bryan Mullins, W. Gage Berry, W. R.R. Enstave, Walt S., Walter F. Croft, Walter McWilliams, Warod Changpradith, WasabiBurger, Wayne Harley, Wayne Lewis Odell, WENilo, Wentago, Werx, Wes Baker, Wes Fournier, Wes Michelakos, Wesley Davis, Wesley E. Marshall, Wesley Woods, Whaita Without Waiting, WheatieDad, Whisenhunt Family, Whisky Sauers, Whisper Vileblood, Wilhelm Fitzpatrick, Will Boyko, Will Comolli, Will Culbertson, Will Dawson-Ekberg, Will E Sanders, Will Hinz, Will Lentlie, Will Lewis, Will Schiemenz, Will Swengel, Will Webster, William "Mech Man" sova, William Briggs, William C Cronk, William D, Dement II, William Gatewood, William Hensley, William M., William Mayorga, William Willis, William Wong, Winterflan, W.P, Wright S. Johnson, WrongOnTheInternet, Wyatt Pittman, Wyatt S, wylight, Xalops Studios, Xambaka, Xander, Xane the Black, Xavier Brinon, Xavier Johns, XenOn, Xeno Snow Fox, Xeweros, Xn, Xychotic, Y||B, Yamaira rivera, Yan Medernach, Yoann LE TOUCHE, Yona Simonson, Yong Seng Choon, yongi, Yu Tsai Su, Yuanti, YungFilipinoPapi, Yuoston, Z Ahmad, Zac Bir, Zac Borders, Zac Braddy, Zac Taylor, Zach Dale, Zach Henderson, Zach P., Zach Pollak, Zach Sylvain, Zach Yokell, Zachary Brown, Zachary Clark, Zachary George, Zachary Glave, Zachary Klebanoff, Zachary Mark Alcala, Zachary Weiss, Zachary Zahringer, Zachery Delafosse, Zack Simon, Zaderion, Zain Jarrar, Zak Knippel, Zakharov "Zaksquatch" Sawyer, Zaxov Schneider, zardo, Zaxov Phoenix, Zeb Walker, Zebulon Thobaben, Zee Snowbank, Zeke Sulkes, ZekeHimself, Zelix, Zhamel, Ziir, Zimm, Zinzer, Zombiefleischer, Zotech, Zubin Madon, Zulf, Zycarr